Napoleon's Overseas Army

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FRANCIS BACK

MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES

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Dedication

To my son, Jean-François

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Author's Note

Vast numbers of studies have been made of the French Napoleonic armies in Europe, and of the British armies overseas between 1793 and 1815. But what of the French soldiers overseas? We looked in vain for even a short global study of these soldiers of the Republic and of the Empire which gave so much trouble to their British enemies. And so we decided to write and illustrate such a study.

The historic French or Spanish names have been kept in most cases. Saint-Domingue (called 'San Domingo' by Anglophone authors), is now Haiti, and Santo-Domingo is the Dominican Republic. Ile-de-France is Mauritius, the Dutch East Indies are Indonesia. The city of Le Cap is now Cap-Haitien, Port Nord-Ouest is Port Louis, and Batavia is Djakarta. The French revolutionary calendar has been converted to the present Gregorian calendar.

Chronology

1789 Bastille taken on 14 July—start of the French Revolution. Declaration of the Rights of Man on 25 August. News spreads to French West Indies by September, causing unrest.

1790 Colonial legislative assemblies authorised in January.

1792 4 April: mulattos given same political rights as white citizens. 20 April: France declares war on Austria and Prussia. 10 August: Tuilleries taken and royal family imprisoned. 22 September: the Republic is proclaimed.

1793 21 January: Louis XVI executed. England, Spain, Holland, Sardinia, Naples and Portugal at war with France. April: British occupy Tobago. 14 May: Saint-Pierre and Miquelon surrender to British. 22 August: Pondichéry (India) surrenders to British. 29 August: slavery abolished in Saint-Domingue.

1794 4 February: French Convention abolishes slavery in the colonies. 23 March: Martinique falls to the British. April: Guadeloupe, Marie-Galante and St Lucia surrender to British, but are retaken by the French in December, except for St Lucia.

1795 January: Holland overrun and becomes the Batavian Republic allied to France; French raid on St Vincent. 18 June: St Lucia retaken by French. 22 July: Spain and Prussia cease hostilities against France. July to December: French campaign in Grenada. 15 October: Cape of Good Hope captured from Dutch by British.

1796 14 February: Dutch Ceylon capitulates to British. 9 March: Gen. Bonaparte marries Joséphine de Beauharnais, a native of Martinique. 22 April: Dutch Demerara and Berbice surrender to British. 26 April: St Lucia falls to the British. 2 May: Dutch Essequibo surrenders to British. 7 October: Spain at war with Britain. 27 November: Anguilla raided by French.

Napoleon Bonaparte as the young general of the 1790s, soon to become the master of France as Emperor. 1799 print after a miniature by J.-B. P. Guérin. (Private collection)

1799 Coup of the 18-19 Brumaire (9-10 November); Napoleon takes power as First Consul.

1801 4 January: British attack repulsed in Senegal. March: Swedish St Bartholomew and St Martin, Danish St Thomas, St John

Josephine Bonaparte (1763-1814), wife of Napoleon and Empress of France from 1796 to 1809, was born and raised in Martinique. She always kept the gracious and seductive white *créole* manners and speech. Her views may have contributed to Napoleon's decision to re-establish slavery in the West Indies. Throughout her life she kept up a correspondence with her family in Martinique. (From an engraving at the National Archives of Canada, C 24715)

and Santa Cruz surrender to British. 16 April: French evacuate Dutch St Eustatius & Saba. 12 October: cessation of hostilities between Britain and France.

1802 27 March: Peace of Amiens concluded between France and England. All occupied French overseas territories to be handed back. Spanish Louisiana and Santo Domingo become French. Dutch Ceylon ceded to England. 26 April: amnesty for royalist émigrés. 19 May: Legion of Honour instituted. Law of 20 May re-establishes slavery in French colonies. 2 August: Bonaparte proclaimed Consul for life.

1803 16 May, Britain declares war on France. 22 June, St Lucia and, 31 June, Tobago captured by British. 24 September: French army demi-brigades are redesignated regiments. November and December: remnants of French army evacuate western part of Saint-Domingue but remain in eastern part. 30 November: Louisiana formally turned over to France and, 20 December, to the United States.

1804 1 January: Saint-Domingue declares its independence and becomes Haiti. 18 January: Goree captured by French; recaptured by British on 8 March. 5 May: Dutch Surinam falls to British. 18 May: Bonaparte is proclaimed Emperor of the French as 'Napoléon I^{er}'.

1805 22-27 February: French raid Dominica and capture Roseau; March: French raid St Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat. 27 March: Haitian attack on Santo Domingo repulsed. 21 October: French fleet is defeated at Trafalgar.

1806 10 January: Dutch Cape of Good Hope falls to British. 2 July: French raid Montserrat.

1807: Dutch Curaçao falls to British. December: Danish West Indian islands surrender to British.

1808 March: British capture Marie-Galante and La Désirade; French occupy Spain. 2 May: insurrection in Madrid, which soon spreads across Spain. Spanish colonies remain loyal to the Spanish Bourbons and become allies of the British. 4 July: British attack on St Martin repulsed.

1809 14 January: British and Portuguese capture French Guiana. 24 February: Martinique captured by the British. 17 April: Saints taken by the British. 7 July: surrender of Santo Domingo to British and Spanish. 13 July: Senegal falls to British. 21 September: British landing repulsed at La Réunion. 16 December: Napoleon divorces Joséphine.

1810 6 February: Guadeloupe capitulates to the British; 15 February, St Martin; 16 February, Amboyna; 21 February, St Eustatius; 8 July, La Réunion; 9 July, Banda-Neira; 3 December, Ile-de-France surrenders.

1811 26 August, Batavia capitulates to Anglo-Indian forces; 18 September, last Dutch-French forces in East Indies surrender.

1814 31 March: Allies enter Paris. 6 April: Napoleon abdicates and arrives at Elba on

4 May. Most captured French colonies are handed back.

1815 1 March: Napoleon returns to France. 18 June: battle of Waterloo. 22 June: Napoleon abdicates and is sent to St Helena. 10 August: Guadeloupe which had rallied to the Emperor, is retaken by British.

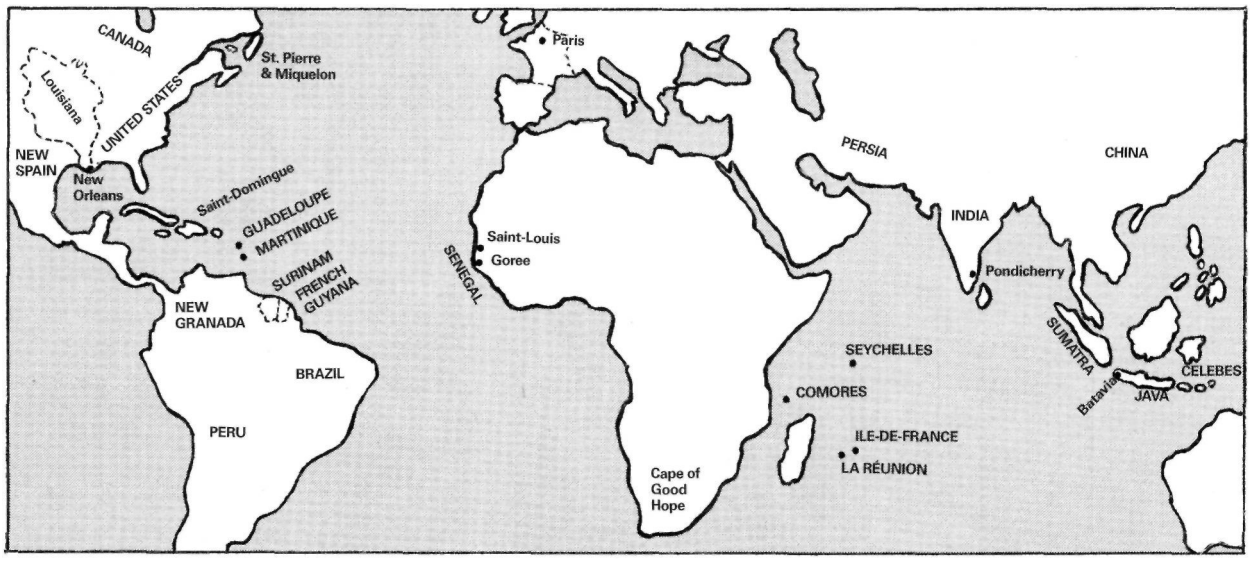
French Colonial Troops in 1789

When the French Revolution broke out on 14 July 1789, France had a number of colonies spread over three continents. They were not vast in territory, but their economic importance was appreciated and often envied. Nearly all owed their wealth to exploitation of resources by slave labour and commerce.

To defend and keep the peace in these territories, a small army of colonial troops, distinct from the metropolitan line regiments or marines, had existed since the days of Louis XIV. Organised into colonial regiments from 1772, the order of battle was broadly as follows in 1789: Saint-Domingue had the *Du Cap* and the *Port-au-Prince* Regiments. The *Guadeloupe* and *Martinique* Regiments served on the islands bearing their names, as well as nearby islands such as St Lucia and Tobago. Ile-de-France, La Réunion and the city of Pondichéry in India had the *Isle-de-France* and the *Pondichéry* Regiments, a company of invalids and a battalion of Sepoys. The artillery in the West and East Indies were provided by the *Corps Royal de l'Artillerie des Colonies.* French Guiana had a four-company battalion, Senegal had a two-company battalion, and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon (south of Newfoundland) had an independent company. These units amounted to 518 officers and 9,935 enlisted men of white troops plus the 600-strong Sepoy battalion, a total of over 11,000 men.

The armament of these troops was the Model 1779 musket for colonial troops, inspired from the 1777 Army musket but with more brass furnishings. The accoutrements were the same as in France. What really distinguished these troops were their uniforms. Since December 1786, the order of dress in America and West Africa was a dark blue coat with dark blue lapels piped white; collars and cuffs were green for *Du Cap,* red for *Port-au-Prince* and the *Bataillon de la Guyane* (see Plate A), lemon-yellow for *Martinique,* and crimson for *Guadeloupe. The Bataillon d'Afrique* had red lapels and cuffs and a dark blue collar. In the East Indies the coat was white with dark blue lapels and cuffs, with a white collar for the *Pondichéry* Regiment (see Plate A), and a dark blue collar for the *Isle-de-France* Regiment. All buttons were of white metal. Waistcoat, breeches and gaiters were white. The surprising feature which distinguished these colonial infantrymen was the black 'round hat'; this, *not* the bicorn hat, was the official headdress.

Map showing the Napoleonic overseas territories to 1811. (Francis Back)



The conquest of Holland by the French Revolutionary armies in the early part of 1795 led to the creation of the pro-French Batavian Republic. Consequences for the Dutch colonial empire were immediate, and many territories soon fell to British forces. Holland became a kingdom in 1806, was incorporated into France in 1810, but regained its independence in 1814. Engraving of the 1795 campaign from a painting by François Fleming. (Private collection)

The colonial artillery corps had a similar uniform to the *Corps Royal* in France: all dark blue except for red cuffs, turnbacks and piping; yellow metal buttons; and bicorn hats (see Plate A). The company at Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon wore a dark blue coat and cuffs with red lapels and collar, white metal buttons and bicorn hats. The Sepoy battalion in India had a green coatee with red collar, cuffs and lapels, white metal buttons, white waistcoat and short breeches trimmed with red, and white turbans.

The National Guards

News of the Revolution brought reactions which varied from mild to violent in the various colonies. Events in France were followed fairly closely. On the military side, the colonial militias were disbanded and units of National Guards or 'citizens' guards' were raised instead. Free blacks and mulattos were commissioned officers in some of these units, but this caused some resentment amongst the whites. Nevertheless, revolutionary fervour was rampant. In some cases units were paid and served permanently.

The 'National Uniform' and the 1802 colonial uniform

The basic uniform adopted by the colonial units was essentially the same as that of the National Guard in France. The main feature was the dark blue coat, which had red and/or white facings. On 19 July 1790, the National Assembly decreed a single uniform for all National Guards, which was to have red lapels and cuffs piped white and a white collar piped red. This does not seem to have suited most units since on 20 July 1791 a law was passed 'regulating definitively the uniform of the National Guards'. It was to be dark blue with red collar and cuffs, white piping, white lapels piped red and white turnbacks, brass buttons, white waistcoat and breeches. This was adopted by the National Volunteers and the Line Infantry from 1793, and was known as the 'national uniform' until 1815.[1]

In 1789 the colonial troops were dressed in lightweight woollen cloth; but no attention was paid to such details thereafter and troops arrived in the tropics dressed as in France. This folly reached

[1]See MAA 141 *Napoleon's Line Infantry* and MAA 146 *Napoleon's Light Infantry* for fuller information on the uniforms of the French Infantry in Europe and Egypt.

its peak when tens of thousands left for Saint-Domingue in 1801-1802 in their warm woollen uniforms. Once landed overseas, measures were usually taken to issue the troops with more suitable clothing (as can be seen below). Napoleon decided to rationalise this situation by a decree of 14 May 1802 (see Plate D). The coats were to be of the same cut and colour as in Europe but made of lightweight wool lined with grey linen. Troops in the West Indies, French Guiana and Senegal, wore a waistcoat with no sleeves, gaiter-trousers of duck, and a canvas smock with dark blue collar and cuffs. For troops in the French East Indies, the sleeveless waistcoat and gaiter-trousers were of nankeen, and they had no smock. The cloth coat was supposed to last three years in the East Indies, six years elsewhere, while all waistcoats, gaiter-trousers, etc., were annual issues. Nothing was said of headgear, which was varied, as we will see below.

This regulation was not applied in Saint-Domingue in 1802-1803, because Gen. Leclerc decreed a lightweight uniform for his army at the same time as the First Consul was issuing his regulation in Paris; but it was the standard to be used by regulars in the future. Thus, from the later part of 1802, the official uniform for French infantry overseas was the dark blue 'national uniform' coat of light wool, duck or nankeen waistcoat and gaiter-trousers.

Turmoil and War

The worsening political situation in France had considerable effects among the regular colonial troops. Both the *Guadeloupe* and *Martinique* Regiments mutinied in 1790, and most men were repatriated. Subsequently the regiments in Saint-Domingue also mutinied, and tensions caused the battalion in French Guiana to be sent to France. The situation was not very stable in other colonies,

Napoleon before Madrid, 1808. From 1795 to 1808 Spain, with its enormous colonial empire, was a somewhat reluctant ally of France, but the invasion of 1808 broke the delicate political balance within Spain and the overseas territories. It was one of Napoleon's tragic decisions: not only would war ravage Spain, but his brother Joseph, whom he proclaimed King of Spain and the Indies, was rejected by the viceroys overseas. Within a few years nearly all these territories achieved their independence. Engraving after the painting by Carle Vernet. (Private collection)

2nd Lt. Jean Baptiste-François de Brueys of the Port-au-Prince colonial infantry regiment, *c.*1790. A native of Saint-Domingue, he was caught up in the turmoil of the Revolution, and this young officer eventually sought a new life in Louisiana. He wears the regimental dark blue coat and lapels with scarlet collar (and cuffs), white piping, silver epaulettes, and buttons stamped with an anchor. (From an old catalogue photo; present location of original portrait unknown.)

and even tiny Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon had its problems, with part of its population leaving for Canada.

A major decision affecting colonial troops was sanctioned and implemented on 29 June 1792: all colonial troops were henceforth part of the War Department; all regiments and battalions (except the Sepoys) were to be formed into six numbered regiments of the Line starting at the 106th; all were to be organised and uniformed as the rest of the Line, and given new colours including a white uniform faced green. While much of this did not occur, it was the effective end of the old colonial army. On 20 July 1793, the colonial artillery corps was joined to the army and became the 8th Regiment of Artillery.

The declarations of war with most European powers from 1793 soon found British forces besieging many French colonies, as detailed in the Chronology. The French fleet was badly shaken by the Revolution and could not offer good protection. However, the French put up much more of a fight than they are usually credited with; indeed, the only real British gains were Pondichéry in India, which had no hopes of relief, and Martinique.

Guadeloupe and the Windward Islands to 1802

Detachments from several Line regiments and National Volunteers sent from France formed the essential part of the garrisons of the French islands. From 2 May 1793, a 400-strong corps of *Chasseurs de la Martinique* was also raised, and made an auxiliary corps of the Line on 29 September, 'in the pay of the French Republic'. But the superior British and Royalist forces prevailed; and by April 1794, the French Windward Islands were lost to the Republic.

On 2 June 1794, a French squadron appeared off Guadeloupe. It bore about 1,100 men commanded by Commissioner Victor Hughes and Gen. Aubert. Upon learning the island had fallen to the British, they resolved to retake it and landed their troops. This initiated a campaign lasting several months. In order to counter British reinforcements, Hughes raised over 2,000 coloured men, who were organised into battalions and drilled. By the beginning of October the 2,000-strong British and Royalist forces were completely surrounded and capitulated; Hughes let the British soldiers withdraw but 400 royalists were executed by firing squads as traitors. Later the commissioner roamed the island with a portable guillotine to execute traitors to the Republic; he thus earned the nickname of the 'Colonial Robespierre', for his efforts.

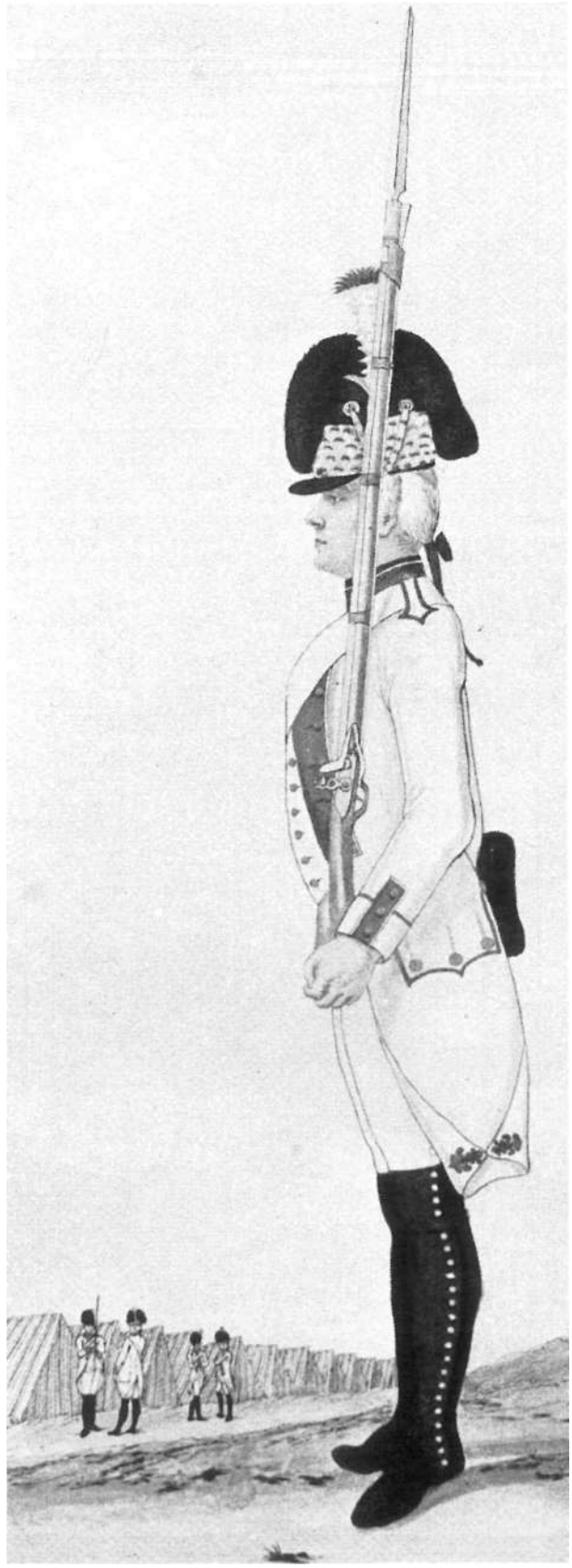
The French forces remained weak. Troops arrived from France in the form of a *Bataillon des Antilles* in January 1795; thereafter communications were cut off for two years. However, slavery had been abolished in the French islands and new battalions were raised amongst the blacks and mulattos. By the end of 1796, out of 4,600 regulars in Guadeloupe, only 1,000 were white soldiers. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of St Lucia raised in March and May of 1795, as well as the 1st Battalion of

Grenada raised during July 1796, were also composed of coloured men, who 'appeared in all respects to be well disciplined', if lacking proper equipment and clothes.

In 1798 Hughes was recalled; new commissioners were sent out but few soldiers. Napoleon, now First Consul, named Gen. Lacrosse to be Captain-General in Guadeloupe, and he landed on the island in May 1801 with 400 men. A month later, the 4,100-man garrison of Guadeloupe was reorganised into three battalions of infantry, one of artillery, a Grenadier and Chasseur reserve corps, a 200-man company of Sappers, a 60-man company of *Ouvriers* and a 55-man company of *Chasseurs à cheval.* Lacrosse had many coloured officers arrested, however, and the black troops under Col. Pélage mutinied and drove him out. Napoleon reacted by sending Gen. Richepanse with 3,500 men, who landed at Guadeloupe in May 1802 with orders to disarm all coloured troops. Most, including Col. Pélage, submitted, and 600 blacks were later attached to the French corps; but some chose to resist, and most were killed in a sharp month-long campaign. Shortly thereafter slavery was re-established in Guadeloupe.

Martinique caused no such problems when it was handed back to French troops. It had been occupied by the British since 1794, so that slavery had not been abolished there.

Little seems to be known of the dress of the French units in the Windward Islands. The 'national uniform' was the basic inspiration but there were undoubtedly many variations. A large sketch showing white and black French troops after the retaking of Guadeloupe in 1794 has many figures wearing mostly round hats; others have forage caps or crested helmets. Some blacks wear a turban with a plume. Short-tailed coatees as well as coats, pantaloons and gaiter-trousers are also shown, some undoubtedly of light materials locally procured. A few figures have black accoutrements, possibly of British origin.



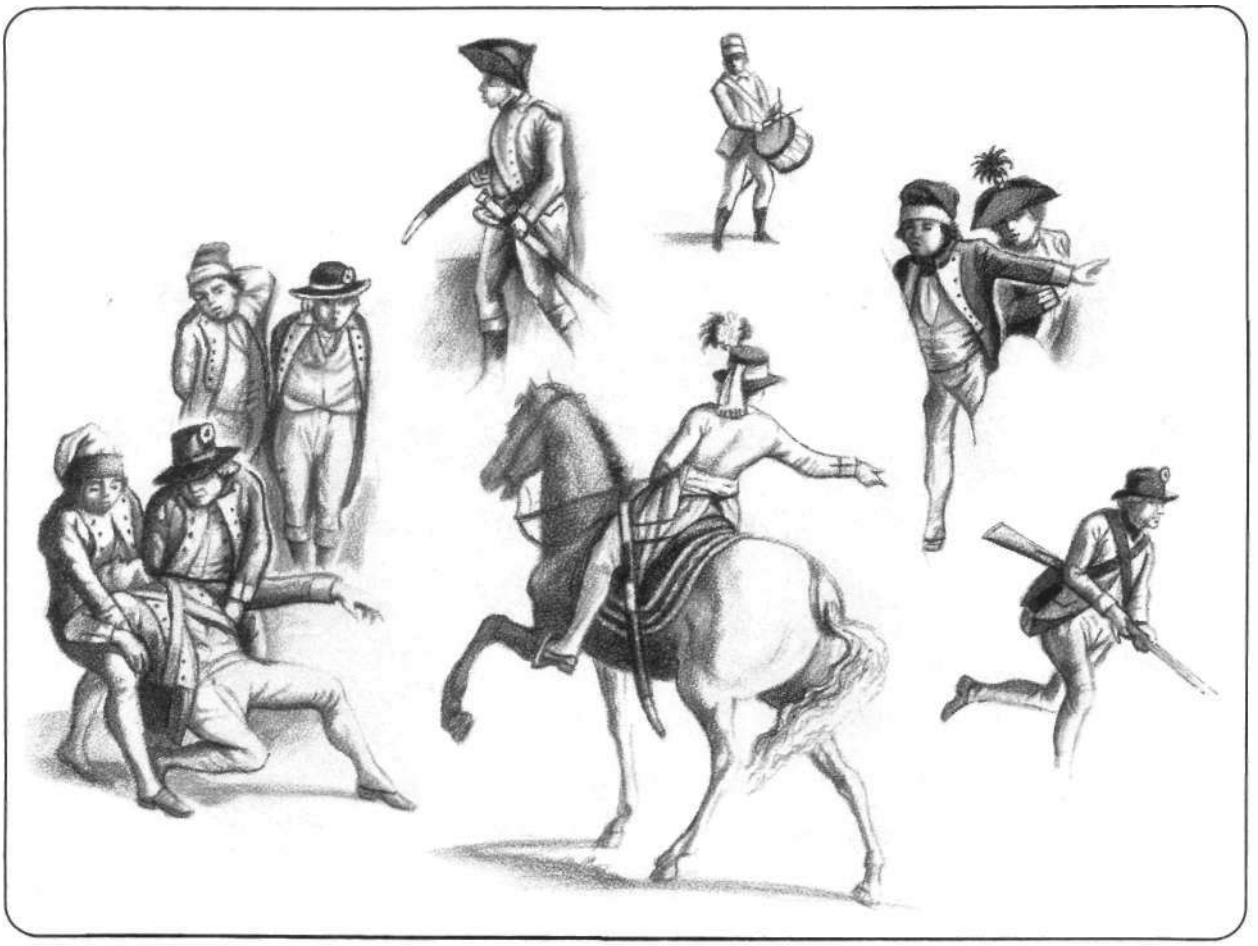
The 110th Port-au-Prince Regt. wearing the white uniform and crested helmet prescribed for the infantry in 1791. In 1792 the colonial regiments were added to the Line infantry. The 110th were assigned light green collars, cuff flaps, lapels and piping, with brass buttons. While this uniform was probably not worn in the colonies, it may have been issued to the 110th, who served in France from 1792 until amalgamated into various demi-brigades in 1795-6. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA)

Saint-Domingue

Of all the French colonies, nowhere were the effects of the Revolution of 1789 so profound as in present-day Haiti, which was called Saint-Domingue before 1804. It was as if the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse had emerged on the island: famine, pestilence, war and death devastated the world's most flourishing colony. Its trade alone in 1789 was over double that of all British colonies, and the harbour of Le Cap saw more ship movements than Marseilles. But this booming colony was built on profound injustices, as were all colonies whose wealth depended on slave labour. Some 30,000 whites were at the top of the social pyramid, above about 40,000 free mulattos and blacks, who were full of resentment towards the white 'Créoles' (from Spanish *Criollo*—the word meant born in the colony, not a person of mixed blood). The silent base and support of the pyramid was an estimated half-million slaves, subject to all the horrors of a sub-human exploitation.

The news of the storming of the Bastille and the Declaration of the Rights of Man caused an explosion of political tensions. The elaborate militia organisation, led by white officers only, was abolished, and National Guards were formed amongst whites and mulattos; all wore the tricolour cockade. Excited crowds lynched those who disapproved. 1790 saw increased bitterness and bloodshed as the mulattos pressed for equal political rights. The white colonial soldiers were under pressure to take sides while trying to suppress riots.

Figures after a large uncoloured sketch showing the French troops in 1794 following their recapture of Guadeloupe from the British. A mixture of metropolitan and colonial dress is depicted: some figures have the crested 1791 infantry helmet, others have round hats with cockades, many have fatigue caps and a few officers have tricorns or bicorns. A few black troops had turban-like headgear, also found in Saint-Domingue. Coatees with lapels in the colours of the 'national uniform' and white cuffs seem favoured, as are pantaloons with short black gaiters or gaiter-trousers. The mounted officer may represent Commissioner Victor Hughes. (Francis Back)



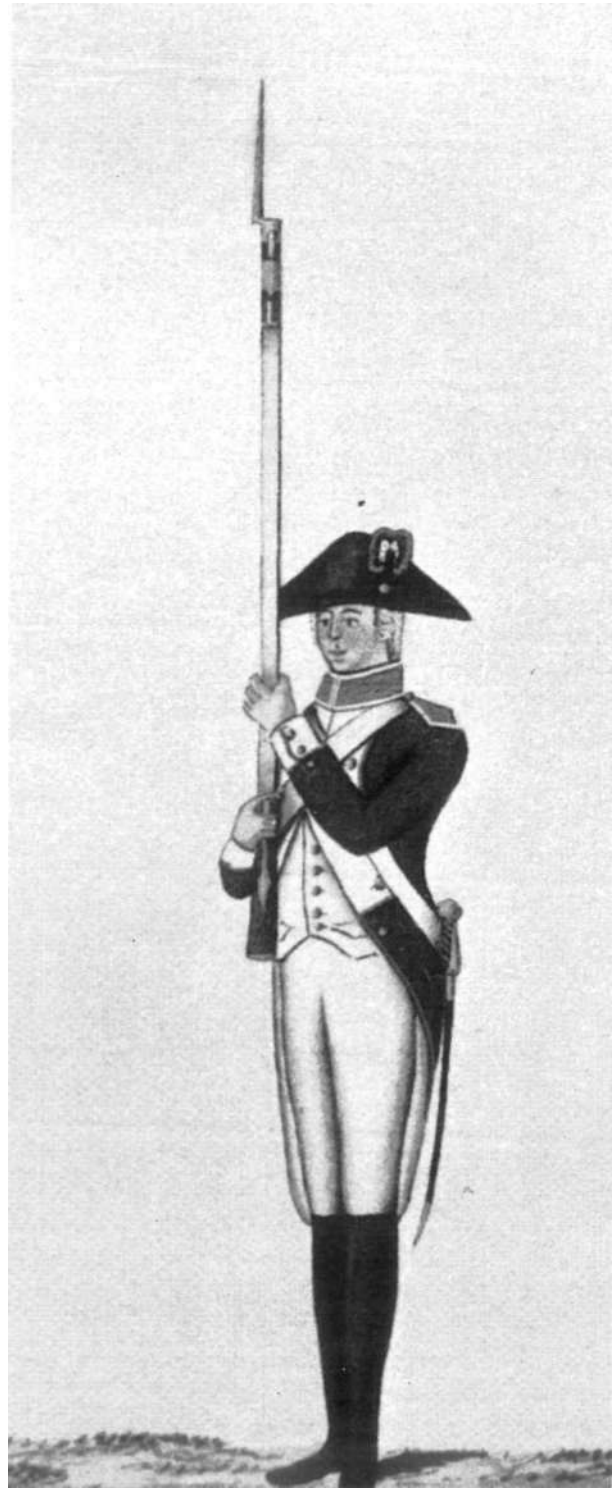
In March 1791 a squadron bearing the *Artois* and *Normandie* Line regiments arrived in Port-au-Prince full of revolutionary fervour. On the 4th the *Port-au-Prince* colonial regiment mutinied, killed its colonel and paraded his head on a pike. But all these bloody tensions between whites and mulattos, royalists and republicans were as nothing to what followed.

The night of 22 August 1791 was stormy, with bolts of lightning, high winds and heavy rain—a fitting scenario for the great uprising of the black slaves. Encouraged by Voodoo incantations (two thirds of the slaves were born in Africa) they erupted throughout the countryside of the wealthy North Plain into nightmare scenes of carnage and destruction. The whole countryside around Le Cap was said to be like a wall of fire. The forgotten masses of black slaves now imposed their own revolution as they struck for their *'Liberté'* and *'Egalité'*.

Order had to be restored; and the *Du Cap* Regiment, with some assistance from white and mulatto National Guards, had some successes in early 1792. Meanwhile, an alarmed home government sent Commissioner Sonthonax with 6,000 troops to Le Cap; they arrived in September. Two thousand were regulars of the Line infantry but 4,000 were blue-coated National Volunteers. News of the proclamation of the Republic soon brought disputes, the rejection of royalist officers and, in early December, a mutiny in the *Du Cap* Regiment, most of which was sent to France. All this bickering among men blinded by political passions brought the obvious results: the armed forces could not contain the blacks' uprising—indeed, many approved it.

On 20 June 1793 fighting broke out at Le Cap between the French regular troops of Gen. Galbaud, supported by sailors and white colonists, on one side; and on the other republican French National Volunteers with mulatto National Guards and town blacks. By the next day, some 10,000 to 15,000 blacks from the countryside swept all before them and joined the republicans. Galbaud and thousands of refugees sailed for the United States, while most of Le Cap burned. On 29 August, Republican Commissioner Sonthonax decreed slavery abolished. Thus ended white domination in Saint-Domingue.

The Blacks who rose in August 1791 wore rags of



French 'National Volunteer' of 1792 wearing what would become the 'national uniform' a year later and remain essentially the same until 1812. Before 1802, troops sent overseas had identical uniforms to those in France. Many volunteers went overseas but few came back. This picture, apparently by an émigré, shows white cuffs instead of red, a common and lasting variation. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

silk taken from ravaged plantation mansions, had bits of uniforms, or still went naked; few had muskets of any kind. But they were free. They assumed military titles such as 'captain', 'general', even 'viceroy', and their leaders bedecked themselves in colourful dress uniforms covered with decorations. In the cities were National Guard units of various types and persuasions. Their uniforms were varied but obviously inspired by the National Guard in France. According to a decree of the Colonial Assembly dated 1 September 1792, the Grenadiers of the National Guard of Le Cap had dark blue coats, with scarlet collar, cuffs and lining piped white, white lapels piped scarlet, three yellow metal buttons at the cuffs and pockets and four below the right lapel, a cannon and a grenade (no doubt in white) on the turnbacks; and white waistcoat and breeches (see Plate B). It was, with some variation in details, the 'national uniform' which became common to all French infantry in 1793.

Officer of French infantry, *c.* 1792-3, wearing the dark blue 'national uniform' and tricoloured trousers. The outlandish dress of Republican officials and troops sent overseas in the early 1790s often shocked the more conservative elements of colonial society. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

The rise of Toussaint L'Ouverture

One of the most enigmatic figures to emerge from the turmoil in Saint-Domingue was the black leader Toussaint L'Ouverture. Born a slave in 1746 near Le Cap, little is known about him until the early 1790s. There were many factions in that anarchic period and Toussaint was originally with the band of rebel slaves under Biassou. He then formed his own armed force with Spanish help, and finally rallied to the cause of the French when slavery was abolished in 1793. His superior political and military abilities soon emerged and the Spanish were driven out in 1794.

The British, fearing disruption in their own islands, occupied in September 1793 the stronghold of Môle Saint-Nicolas, one of the strongest fortresses in America, meeting no resistance. They were greeted as liberators by the white populace, and the French 87th Regiment *(ex-Dillon* Irish) rallied to the British forces. More British troops were sent, while some were raised on the spot—notably Montalembert's *Légion de la Grande Anse*—as the British forces extended their area of occupation. The prize of France's richest colony was indeed tempting; but it proved to be a terrible drain on the British Army. Tens of thousands of British troops were sent to 'San Domingo' only to die of the 'black vomit'—the ghastly name given to the symptom of yellow fever. Figures of British losses are still a subject of debate among historians, but they were bad enough for regiments to mutiny when told they were to be sent to the island.

In May 1797 Toussaint L'Ouverture was recognized as 'General in Chief of the armies of Saint-Domingue' by the French Republic. His campaign against the sickly British force progressed, until the British held only Port-au-Prince, Grande-Anse and Môle Saint-Nicolas by 1798. In

early 1799 the British evacuated their last stronghold, Môle Saint-Nicolas. The sickness among the British troops played a large part; but this was not the first time a European force had invaded a tropical country. Credit must be given to the bravery of the raw black levies and the abilities of their leaders, which drove out a strong and well supplied army sent by one of the most powerful nations of Europe. Toussaint L'Ouverture was now the political and military master of Saint-Domingue.

The Spanish eastern part of the island had been ceded to France in 1795, but was not to be occupied until peace had been concluded with England. But Toussaint decided otherwise. In early January 1801 he crossed the border with a strong army, heading for the capital city of Santo Domingo, while Gen. Moïse invaded the northern part. The weak Spanish garrison could offer no resistance against such odds, and on 29 January Toussaint L'Ouverture entered the capital at the head of his army. He now ruled the whole island in the name of the French Republic.

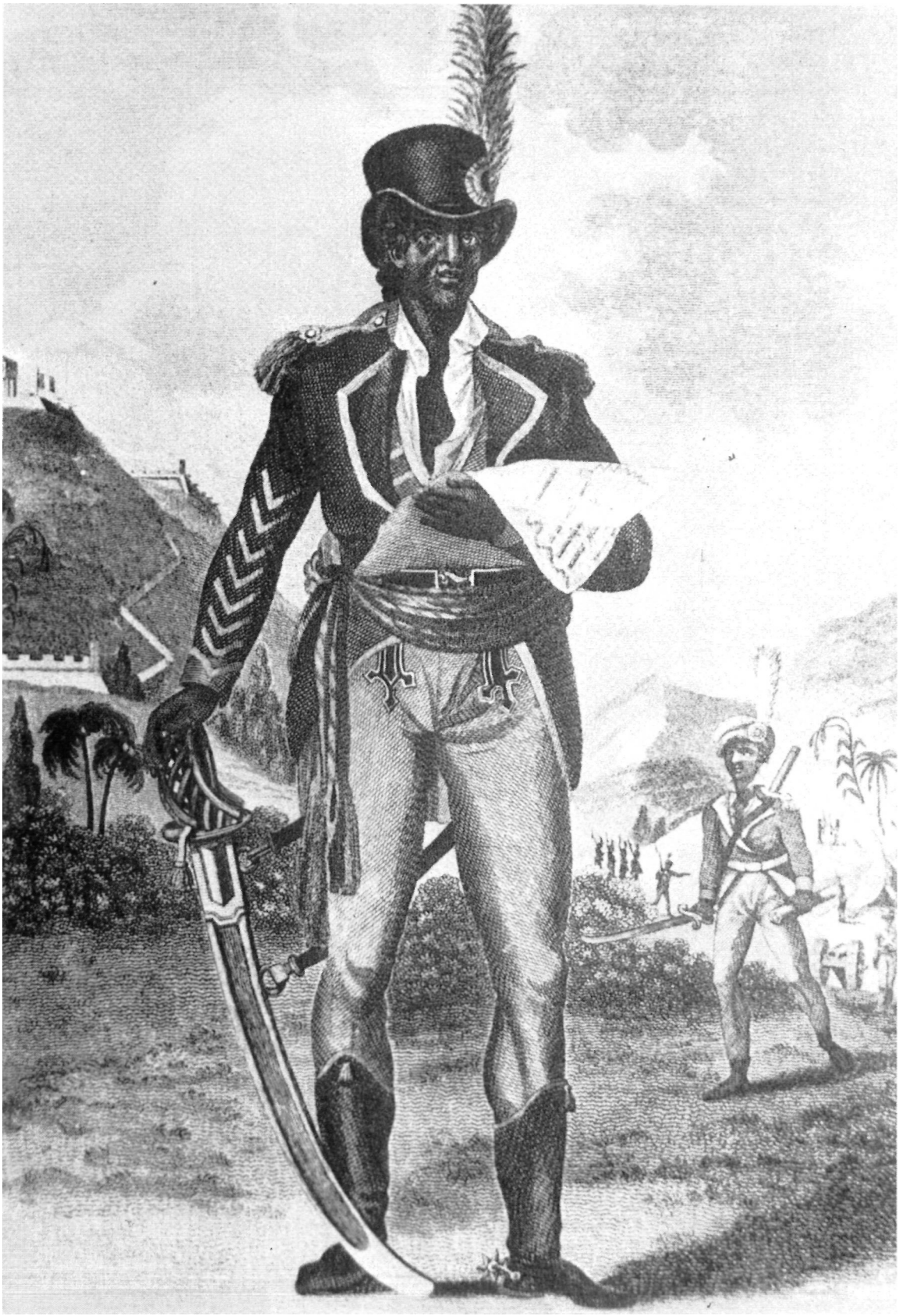
Infantryman of revolutionary France, *c.*1792 wearing the crested leather helmet which replaced hats in the 1791 dress regulations. Some Republican battalions sent overseas undoubtedly had them. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

The army of Toussaint L'Ouverture

As Toussaint L'Ouverture became the leading figure on the island, rallying the blacks as well as a number of republican whites and mulattos, his regular army became better disciplined. Occasional reinforcements (3,000 men in 1796) and supplies were sent from France. In 1796, his forces were reorganised into 12 'Colonial' infantry demi-brigades (sometimes called regiments) divided into three corps, pressing the British in the north, the centre and the south. To these were added cavalry, artillery and guard units. His staff included some white Republican officers—e.g. the chief of staff Agé and the chief engineer Vincent—but all generals were blacks or mulattos, as were the vast majority of regimental officers and troops.

After the occupation of Santo Domingo in 1801, Toussaint's army was as follows: 13 Colonial demi-brigades of 1,200 men each; one European battalion of 250 men; artillery and gendarmerie units amounting to 2,200 men, the cavalry Guides of the Generals had 800 men, and the foot (grenadiers) and horsed (dragoons) Guard of Honour for the General-in-Chief had 1,800 men. This was below the official establishment of 15 Colonial demi-brigades of 1,500 men each. The vast majority of the army was recruited from blacks. Only about a thousand were mulattos and 500 to 600 were French, half in the European battalion and the rest with the artillery (tropical fevers decimated the National Volunteers sent from France, just as they did British troops). The army was divided into three divisions: the North under Gen. Christophe with 4,800 men, the South and West under Gen. Dessalines with 11,650 men, and the East (the former Spanish part) under Gen. Clervaux with 4,200 men, giving an impressive total of 20,650 regulars 'present bearing arms'.

The uniforms worn by this overseas army of the French Republic remain largely unknown due to a lack of primary documents, which are either non-existent or yet to be discovered. General officers had the same uniforms, in theory, as those in France, although round hats were worn as well as bicorns. Toussaint L'Ouverture had the full dress but favoured the plain dark blue undress *surtout* of regimental officers, without epaulettes—which he wore when entering Port-au-Prince on 14 May 1798 at the head of his army. In 1800 the mounted Guard of Honour wore, according to Gen. Lacroix,



the colours and the shoulder trefoils of the old royal bodyguard. This would have been dark blue faced red with silver buttons and lace. As this was a dragoon unit, brass helmets with black manes may have been worn. The Guard trumpeters had silver helmets with red manes and wore 'tunics'. The artillery, gendarmerie and European battalion probably had uniforms approximating to what was worn in France, with some variations for climate such as lighter materials. We have no information on the dress of the Guides of the Generals.

The dress of the Colonial demi-brigades, if unknown in details, can be outlined in its main features. The coat colour was dark blue and seems to have been fairly widespread by 1797 when it was considered the colour of the Republican soldiers in Saint-Domingue. Although white lapels may have been worn, by 1800 the facings showing at the collar, cuffs, lapels and turnbacks were obviously red for most if not for all units. Short-tailed coatees with the facings sometimes trimmed with white lace—obvious British influences—were worn by these black battalions with white pantaloons, often trimmed with red, worn outside or tucked into short gaiters. Shoes were worn. Round hats, peaked shakos and a turban-like headgear all had large tricolour cockades and plumes (see Plate B). There were undoubtedly unit distinctions presently lost to us, since Isaac L'Ouverture, Toussaint's son, remembered in his memoirs that his father had recognized 'the uniform of the 9th' Colonial demi-brigade in 1802.

The arms and equipment of the French Republican army of Saint-Domingue were varied. There were the M1779 colonial troops muskets and M1777 army muskets, some 30,000 having been sent in 1796 to arm the new black demi-brigades. To these must be added 60,000 British muskets captured or left behind. Anxious to have arms for his reserve forces, Toussaint bought another 30,000 stands with ammunition from the US in 1800, probably old French M1763s.

The reserve force was reorganised under the name *of Garde coloniale* by a local law of 30 July 1801.

Toussaint L'Ouverture, *c.*1800, Governor and General in Chief of the armies of the French Republic in Saint-Domingue. Many details of this print are fanciful, but some, notably the round hat, seem genuine. From Marcus Rainford's *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti,* London, 1805. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

French artilleryman, *c.*1793. The uniform of the artillery was dark blue with red cuffs, turnbacks and piping edging the dark blue collar and lapels. Buttons were yellow metal; non-regulation items, such as the red collar shown here seem to have been common during the 1790s. The bicorn was replaced by the shako from 1804. Artillery detachments overseas were to wear the same uniform as in France. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

Every man on the island able to bear arms from 14 to 55 years old was enrolled. The richer elements of society were to train at least four times a year armed and in uniform, the dragoons well mounted, under pain of 'military punishment'. The labourers were also enrolled, but were only liable for an annual muster.

Napoleon's expedition to Saint-Domingue

Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul, was suspicious of what had been done in the name of the Republic by Toussaint L'Ouverture. While the war with England lasted, there was little he could do. The end of hostilities in October 1801 allowed him to turn his attention to Saint-Domingue, and he did not like what he saw: a state within the state had been created. Toussaint (like Napoleon) had installed a military dictatorship and had even proclaimed a constitution in July 1801 in which he was named governor-general 'for life'. All this was done in the name of liberty and equality under the tricolour flag of France; but there was no room for an official from the Republic in the new government. Back in Paris, Bonaparte was being lobbied—by, among others, his wife Joséphine, who was a planter's daughter from Martinique—to restore 'order' and put the blacks in their place: that is to say, back in bondage. He soon made up his mind.

As early as 7 October 1801 Napoleon drafted a list of what units were to go overseas, mostly to Saint-Domingue. By a decree of 29 October he disavowed Toussaint's occupation of Spanish Santo-Domingo, while 28,000 men prepared to embark for the island. Napoleon's brother-in-law, Gen. Victor Emmanuel Leclerc, was put in command of the expedition.

On 3 February 1802 a large Franco-Spanish fleet bearing Gen. Leclerc with 20,000 men arrived at the harbour of Samana on the northern side of the 'Spanish' eastern part of the island. Within two weeks, most of the island was occupied by Leclerc's

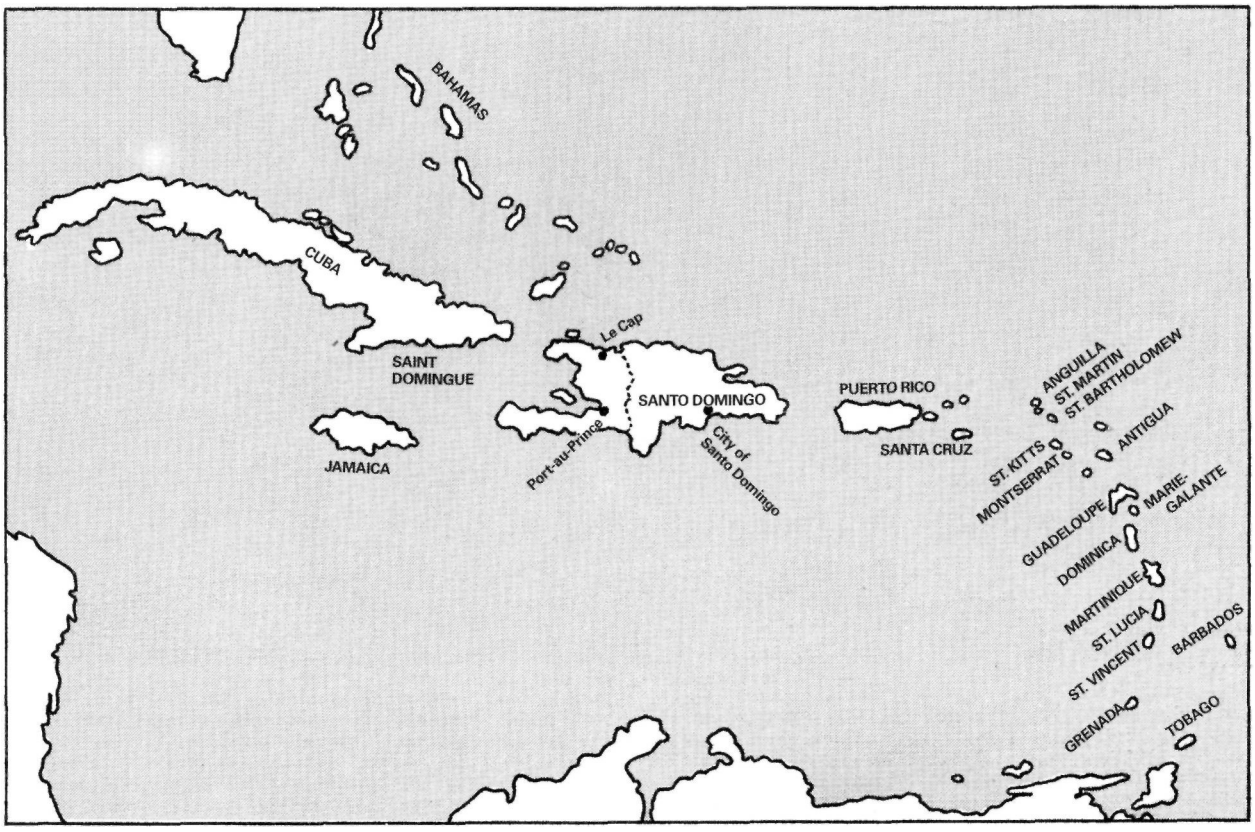
A soldier of the black army of French Saint-Domingue *c.*1800. While this cannot have been the exact appearance of the black colonial half-brigades, some aspects cannot be overlooked, as the author of this book worked in Saint-Domingue for at time. The turban-like headdress with cockade and plume occur in several figures; and nearly all wear coatees, pantaloons and half-gaiters. Detail from Marcus Rainford's *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti,* London 1805. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

troops. Gen. Christophe had fled Le Cap, setting fire to the city, while Toussaint L'Ouverture withdrew into the interior. On 15 February another 8,000 men arrived, and the French troops now attacked the interior of the western part of the island. Some of the black troops put up a fierce resistance, others rallied to the French, especially after the surrender of Dessalines and Christophe in late March. Finally, Toussaint L'Ouverture submitted and resistance collapsed. Leclerc made his grand entry into Le Cap on 7 May accompanied by his wife Pauline and a large escort. On 1 June, 14 battalions from the black Colonial demi-brigades were attached to the French demi-brigades. So far, everything had gone according to Napoleon's plans.

Several events turned this bright picture into a nightmare. On 7 June Leclerc had Toussaint L'Ouverture arrested and sent to France, where he was to die miserably on 7 April 1803, a prisoner in the mountain fortress of Joux. Meanwhile, new instructions were arriving from France which did nothing to restore the trust of the coloured populace. The slave trade was renewed, the equal rights of mulattos were abolished and finally—the last straw—slavery was re-established. All this, coupled with measures to disarm the black and mulatto National Guard and *Garde coloniale* units, soon wrought havoc as insurrections and mutinies increased. By September 1802 black soldiers and their generals were deserting the French army to join the insurgents as guerrillas in the hills.

But the worst enemy of the French soldiers was yellow fever, whose symptoms were first detected in May. By July, Leclerc was writing for more troops as he was losing no less than 160 men a day to the fever. The losses were catastrophic for many units: in early September the 7th Demi-Brigade of the Line had 83 men fit for duty and 107 sick in hospital out of 1,395—the rest were dead. The 71st of the Line had 17 fit men and 133 in hospital out of 1,000; the 11th Light Infantry had 163 fit and 200 in hospital out of 1,900. On 23 November, Leclerc himself perished of the fever. He was succeeded by Gen. Rochambeau, son of the General who had besieged Yorktown with Washington; a man of

Map of the West Indies. (Francis Back)



A black general and a staff officer of Toussaint L'Ouverture's army of the French Republic in Saint-Domingue. The uniforms follow (but not in detail) the military fashions of the officers of Revolutionary France. The general wears a dark blue coat with red collar, cuffs (trimmed with gold lace), buttons and epaulettes; dark blue, gold-laced pantaloons; a bicorn hat with red, white and blue plumes, and a tricoloured sash. The staff officer has a dark blue coat with red collar and cuffs piped white, red piping in front, and gold buttons and epaulette; a bicorn hat with a red plume; dark blue pantaloons laced with gold; and a white double-breasted waistcoat. (Water-colour by J. A. Langendyk, 1802. Royal Library Windsor Castle; reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen.)

little tact, he decided to restore order by a reign of terror against blacks. More troops came from France in late 1802, but it was all in vain.

By March 1803, out of 35,000 men sent, only 9,000 remained. The sickly remnants had been incorporated into the 5th and 11th Light, and the 7th, 86th, 89th of the Line and the *Légion de Saint-Domingue* of three battalions each, the *Légion du Cap* of two battalions and a battalion of the 37th of the Line. A regiment of Colonial Dragoons recruited locally was all that remained of the cavalry. Artillery detachments and the Guard of the General in Chief rounded out the small army. A Gendarmerie and pro-French National Guards were also organised.

Dessalines had taken up the leadership of the insurgents, and slowly but surely isolated the French forces in the cities, until their position became untenable in the later part of 1803. The renewed war with England made the situation almost hopeless. In November, troops and refugees evacuated the western part of Saint-Domingue; some reached Cuba, but Rochambeau and many more surrendered to the British, who helped them evacuate.

Thus ended the tragic expedition to Saint-Domingue. It was probably one of Napoleon's costliest mistakes, in which at least 35,000 soldiers (including his brother-in-law) perished. The irony might be that, even while fighting the white soldiers who had come from France to enslave them, the blacks seem to have considered themselves French. As late as 24 October 1802 Gen. Dessalines declared himself horrified by measures against blacks and mulattos and said that he would fight for freedom as a true *Frenchman.* He eventually declared the independence of Haiti in January 1804, the second nation to do so in America (the first being the United States).

'The Court Martial which sentenced the author (Marcus Rainford) to Death, General Christophe Président', during 1799 in Saint-Domingue. Rainford was subsequently released and published *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti* in 1805. While the plates of this book are not to be relied upon for fine details, they do give an idea of the fairly ornate dress of Toussaint L'Ouverture's black troops. Christophe wears the uniform of a general of the French Republic. To the right a senior staff or regimental officer wearing a round hat, the prisoner in chains, and two soldiers wearing shakos, laced coatees, long pantaloons and half-gaiters. Note that all headgear has the French tricolour cockade. The black accoutrements with oval belt plates are possibly matériel captured from the unhappy British intervention of 1793-8. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

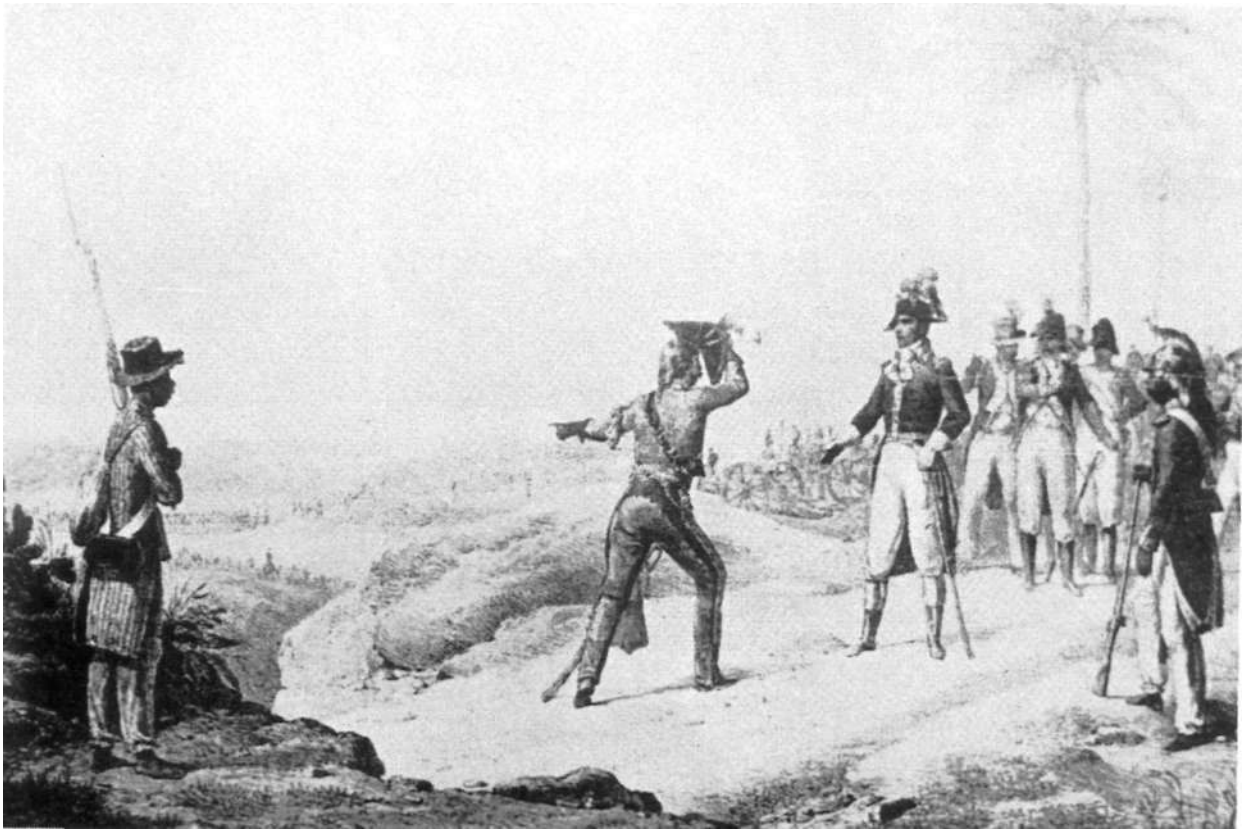
Uniforms

Leclerc's army arrived in Saint-Domingue dressed in their woollen metropolitan uniforms for a campaign in the sub-tropical summer. Leclerc soon sought lightweight cloth, white linen jackets and trousers, round hats, etc., for his army. Finally, on 18 May 1802, he issued a General Order which prescribed the following uniforms (see Plate C) for the army of Saint-Domingue:

Line infantry: dark blue coatee with red short turnbacks, white lapels which hooked down to the waist with three buttons below, dark blue collar without piping, pocket flaps with red piping, red cuffs piped dark blue and white cuff flaps piped dark blue. White duck pantaloons with instep, duck half-gaiters worn over the pantaloon. Black felt round hat 6 in. high with a 3 in. brim, the left side held up by a cockade loop and button.

Light infantry: same as above except for the lapels and cuffs, which were dark blue piped red, vertical pockets, the cuffs being pointed without flaps.

Colonial Dragoons: green coatee 'à la Houlande', duck pantaloons, hussar boots and round hat. By a previous request for supplies, green housings were requested for this new unit. The button colour is not specified but it was obviously as before: brass for



Capitulation of Gen. Maurepas to Leclerc's forces at Saint-Domingue in 1802. Most of the black generals rallied to the French initially, but took up arms against them as the situation deteriorated. This print, first published during the 1820s, shows a variety of dress deviating more or less from the uniforms of the French Republican armies. Note the round hats, and the dragoon (right) without boots. (Private collection)

infantry, white metal for light infantry and dragoons. Artillery dress is not mentioned.

These measures were undoubtedly adopted rapidly, so that by the second half of 1802 most if not all units would have worn coatees and round hats. The *Gendarmerie maritime,* a constabulary company formed on 31 December 1802, had the same uniform as the Gendarmerie in France (dark blue with red collar, lapels, cuffs and turnbacks, white metal buttons) but a coatee instead of a long-tailed coat and a round hat with a white loop and a red plume. The Guard of the General in Chief, an infantry formation composed of white and mulatto soldiers, had dark blue 'coats' (coatees?) with white cuffs, lapels, turnbacks and piping, red grenadiers' epaulettes, brass buttons, and round hats. White waistcoats and pantaloons were worn in full dress, blue in undress, and white gaiters.

French Santo Domingo to 1809

While the western part of the island was evacuated in 1803, the French forces held on to the eastern part—the former Spanish colony, now the Dominican Republic—which had a very different history from Haiti. Some of the French troops from Rochambeau's forces joined the eastern garrison, which was supported by the Spanish créole population. Gen. Ferrand assumed command and established his HQ in the city of Santo Domingo. His troops consisted of the 89th of the Line, the 5th Light, the *Légion du Cap,* and the two-company *Légion coloniale de Chasseurs* (also called *Bataillon de Chasseurs coloniaux).* With the help of the militias and National Guards, they repulsed Dessalines' attempted siege of Santo Domingo with the Haitian army in March 1805. Napoleon, moved by the bravery of the garrison, ordered reinforcements and arms, ships managed to slip through the British blockade so that the 37th of the Line joined Ferrand's troops in early 1806.

Up to 1808 the situation was stable; but news of France's invasion of Spain caused a dramatic change of alliances. The local Spanish population

rose against the French in August 1808. A trapped Gen. Ferrand shot himself rather than surrender following the French defeat at Seybo in November. Gen. Barquier took command of the French forces, retired to the city of Santo Domingo, and there sustained an eight-month siege. The deadlock was finally broken with the appearance of a Royal Navy squadron bearing several British regiments and the Spanish colonial Puerto Rico Regiment. Faced by such overwhelming forces, the French signed articles of surrender on 7 July 1809. The British were obviously impressed by such tenacity; and when the French garrison came out, weak from their privations, but proud and with their weapons in good order, the British troops gave them, Gilbert Guillermin recalled, 'the honours due to brave soldiers'.

The Americas and Africa

French Louisiana

One of the consequences of the 1802 Treaty of Amiens was the transfer from Spain to France of the vast Louisiana territory. On 26 March 1803, Colonial Prefect Pierre-Clément de Laussat arrived in New Orleans with his small staff. The official transfer was to take place when Gen. Victor and 3,700 troops arrived. Weeks, then months passed, until on 8 August the news arrived that Louisiana had been sold to the United States of America. The failure of the Saint-Domingue expedition, American interest and renewed war with Britain had convinced Napoleon that Louisiana was indefensible and he accepted President Thomas Jefferson's offer. France was thus relieved of lands it could neither develop nor properly defend, in favour of a 'neutral' power not on the best of terms with Great Britain. It was the best diplomatic and military decision Napoleon could make under the circumstances. In Louisiana the disappointment was considerable but the populace made the best of it. The formal cession from Spain to France took place at New Orleans on 30 November, and the tricolour was hoisted. On 20 December 1803, in a similar ceremony, the flag of France was replaced by that of the United States.

Although Prefect Laussat had no troops other than officers of engineers and artillery, he used the militia as much as he could. The New Orleans city militia had six companies of white créole infantry, three of blacks and mulattos, two of cavalry and one of artillery in December 1803. They wore the Spanish uniforms, as did other militias elsewhere in Louisiana, but replaced the red cockade of Spain on their hats with the tricolour cockade of France (see Plate D). Three companies of militia Volunteers were raised, two composed of men born in France

Chief bandsman of the Guard of General in Chief Leclerc in Saint-Domingue, 1802. He was a Pole by the name of Joseph Czernesky, who wore an outlandish 'uniform': a dragoon coat (therefore green) laced with gold at all seams, with crimson mameluke trousers. The dress of the band is not known, except that it had blue fatigue caps piped white and yellow metal buttons. Reconstruction by H. Feist done in 1919 for Bucquois' famous series of uniform cards. (Private collection)

and one of Americans. These volunteers did guard duty during the short official period of French rule. The officers of the French companies had the uniforms of the National Guard of France and their men had civilian dress but wore tricolour cockades.

French Guiana

The news of the Revolution quickly divided the small populace of the colony, and the Colonial Assembly raised some *Gardes citoyennes* from October 1790. The regular *Bataillon de la Guyane* was recalled to France in late 1792 and replaced by the 2nd Battalion of the 53rd Regiment (*ex-Alsace).* The news of the abolition of slavery arrived in June 1794, resulting in a depressed economy, and in the enlistment of blacks and whites into the *Premier Bataillon national de la Guyane* in April 1795. Its first 'uniform' was very plain: two grey linen smocks, two pairs of breeches and a straw hat per man. A year later a piece of blue cloth, ten of Irish linen and three hundred of yellow nankeen with shoes and stockings came for the troops. It seems that the 53rd and the *Bataillon* were amalgamated in 1798. By 1799, some strict regulations affected the blacks and there were some incidents between black troops and freshly landed soldiers from France.

News of the restoration of slavery arrived in November 1802; and while most of the 13,000 blacks submitted, 2,000-3,000 resisted and fled into the interior. In 1803 part of the 8th Demi-Brigade of the Line was amalgamated with the 268 white soldiers of the old battalion to form a new *Bataillon de la Guyane* of over 600 officers and men. The 8th Artillery Regiment had a detachment of 30 men. The 231 black soldiers formed a Company of Sappers and a Company of Black Gendarmerie. They were clothed 'as best as could be in a far away colony, visited by few [ships]' where necessary articles were often missing in wartime according to a March 1805 report. Some of these troops participated on a raid to Goree in 1804; the Portuguese raided the outpost of Approuague in 1805, and an officer was wounded in an engagement against natives in December 1807. In December 1808 a British naval squadron bearing Portuguese troops blockaded Cayenne, the capital. After a gallant resistance, the French forces surrendered on 14 January 1809.

Senegal

During the Revolution the small outposts of Saint-Louis, Goree and Gambia on the western coast of

View of a French Line infantryman, shown in full equipment on campaign and coping as best he can with the hot weather. A white bandana is worn under his hat, the cuffs are unbuttoned and so are the top of the gaiters. Although this view was sketched in Egypt, *c.*1798, the men campaigning in Saint-Domingue in during 1801-3 would have had a similar appearance. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

Africa were left to themselves. By 1798, there remained about 30 men of the 250-man Senegal Battalion of 1789. Relief arrived in May 1799 in the form of a 'Company of Coloured Men' of three officers and 122 men. This unit had been formed in France in May 1798 from 'black and coloured men of the colonial troops' repatriated from the West Indies. Their uniform was a dark blue coat with dark blue cuffs and lapels, red collar, and white metal buttons stamped with an anchor; dark blue vest and 'long trousers'; bicorn hat laced black. This unit helped repulse the British night attack on Saint-Louis in January 1801.

During the Peace of Amiens 200 men of the 46th Demi-Brigade of the Line were sent out in August 1802. The Company of Coloured Men, depleted to 43 all ranks, was renamed *Compagnie auxiliare.* These troops, sometimes called *Bataillon du Sénégal,* formed the regular forces in Senegal, which in January 1809 amounted to 158 including seven officers. A small National Guard-type unit, the *Volontaires du Sénégal* was also raised at Saint-Louis, the capital, in August 1803. During 1808 these troops saw several skirmishes near Saint-Louis, and mounted an expedition against natives in August. Abandoned and facing superior British forces, Senegal finally capitulated without resistance in July 1809.

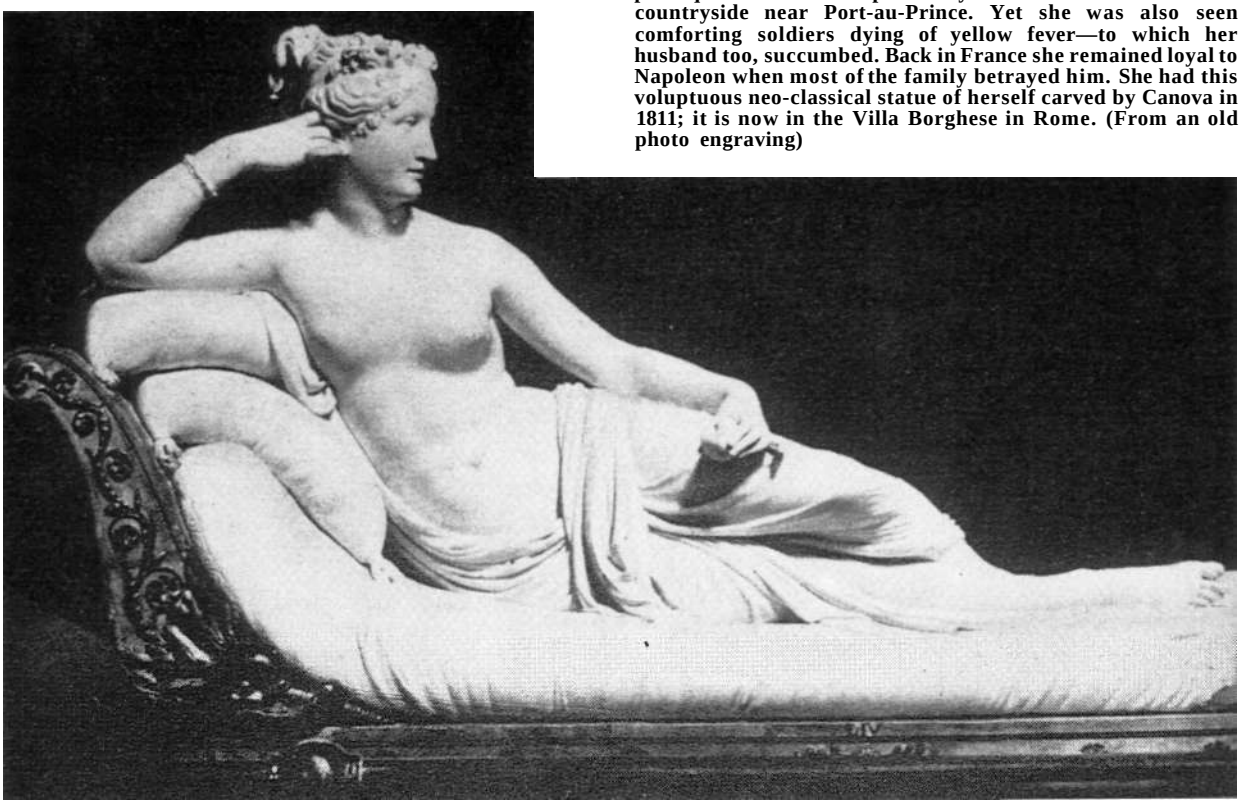
* * *

Martinique and Guadeloupe 1802 -10

In September 1802, Capt.-Gen. Villaret-Joyeuse took possession of Martinique and its dependencies, St Lucia and Tobago, in accordance with the Treaty of Amiens. He brought some artillerymen and several infantry battalions, which were eventually absorbed by the two units which served in Martinique until its fall, the 26th and 82nd Regiments of the Line. They served with distinction, notably the Grenadiers of the 82nd, when they took the 'Diamant' redoubt from the British in 1805, an almost impossible task.

To back up these troops, Villaret-Joyeuse raised a number of local regular corps. On 3 November

Pauline Bonaparte (1780-1825), Napoleon's youngest sister, was the only member of his family to spend some time in the colonies. She joined her husband, Gen. Leclerc, at Saint-Domingue in 1802. Described as one of the most beautiful women of her time, as well as the most unreasonable creature one could imagine, she was a romantic, emulating the nymphs and goddesses of Greek mythology, and given to the pleasures of the flesh. While in Saint-Domingue she was carried on a palanquin—as was Cleopatra—by black 'Nubians' round the countryside near Port-au-Prince. Yet she was also seen comforting soldiers dying of yellow fever—to which her husband too, succumbed. Back in France she remained loyal to Napoleon when most of the family betrayed him. She had this voluptuous neo-classical statue of herself carved by Canova in 1811; it is now in the Villa Borghese in Rome. (From an old photo engraving)



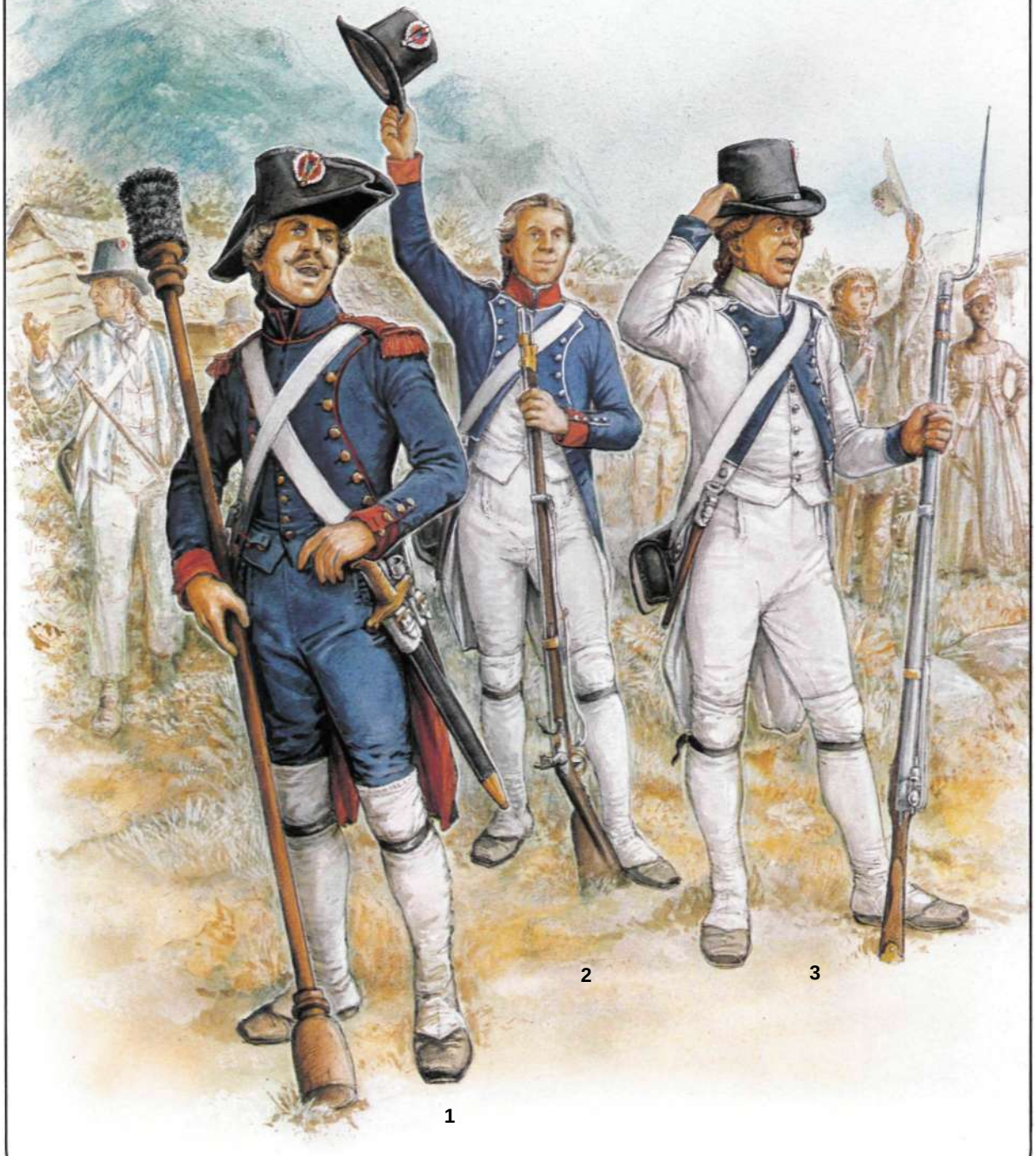
1802 a 94-strong corps of Gendarmerie was formed, wearing dark blue faced with red piped white, with a bicorn hat sporting a red plume, and yellow waistcoat and gaiter-trousers (see Plate D). On 8 July 1803 a company of coloured *Chasseurs volontaires de la Martinique* was raised, which apparently wore the light infantry uniform. On 6 March 1804 a corps of Black Pioneers was attached to the artillery and the engineers by drafting 300 slaves, each issued with a shirt, a pair of linen trousers and a blue smock; on 19 June 1805 a *Compagnie d'Ouvriers d'Artillerie* was raised somewhat unofficially from sailors and a few Marine artillerymen.

The auxiliary forces were organised by a decree of 14 October 1802 which specified that all whites and free blacks from the ages of 16 to 55 were to be enrolled in the *Garde nationale.* This had six battalions, each of which had a company of Grenadiers and one of Chasseurs and the rest of Fusiliers. Companies of white infantry and officers of black companies had long-tailed coats, but the black NCOs and privates has short-tailed coatees. The uniform (see Plate E) was dark blue coat, lapels and lining, red collar and cuffs, white piping, brass buttons, white waistcoat and gaiter-trousers, and round hats with cockade, white loop and a red, white and blue plume for Fusiliers. Grenadiers had a red plume and loop, red epaulettes, and grenades on the turnbacks. Chasseurs had green plumes, loops, epaulettes, and bugle-horns on the turnbacks. Dragoon companies were attached to each battalion; they had a dark blue frock with white collar, red cuffs and piping, yellow epaulettes, brass ball buttons, white waistcoat, dark blue pantaloons, knee boots, and a round hat with a yellow cockade loop and a white plume with a little black at the bottom. Housings were dark blue edged with a red border. Officers had the same uniform with gold epaulettes. Each battalion had a staff which included several 'Commissaires', whose officers' uniforms had a sky blue collar.

On nearby Guadeloupe, things settled down after Gen. Richepanse's short 1802 campaign to bring interior order and establish slavery. Thereafter, the regular infantry consisted of a battalion of the 26th of the Line until about 1808 (in 1806, 150 men of the 26th were detached for a year to Spanish Venezuela); and three battalions of the 66th of the Line, which had arrived in 1802 and served on the island right up to 1810. In 1809 some 1,500 blacks were drafted into the 66th, boosting its strength to 2,800 men. Both units initially had the 1802 colonial uniform, but we find the 66th wearing white faced with blue from 1807, and bicorn hats as late as 1810 (see Plate H). While the short-lived white uniforms of the Imperial infantry made more sense in the

French Grenadier officer in 1803, sketched in Spanish Town, Jamaica by Charles Hamilton Smith after the evacuation of Rochambeau's army from Le Cap in November. He wears a black shako trimmed with gold and a red plume; dark blue coat with white collar and lapels piped red, red cuffs piped white, red turnbacks, gold buttons and epaulettes; dark blue trousers with gold lacing, black belt and boots. In the background is an indistinct figure in blue with red collar and cuffs, gold buttons and trim on the hat—possibly an officer wearing an undress *surtout* coat. (Victoria and Albert Museum)

1: Gunner, Royal Colonial Artillery, 1789-92
2: Private, Bn.Guyane & Régt. Port-au-Prince, 1790-92
3: Private, Régt. Pondichéry, 1790-93



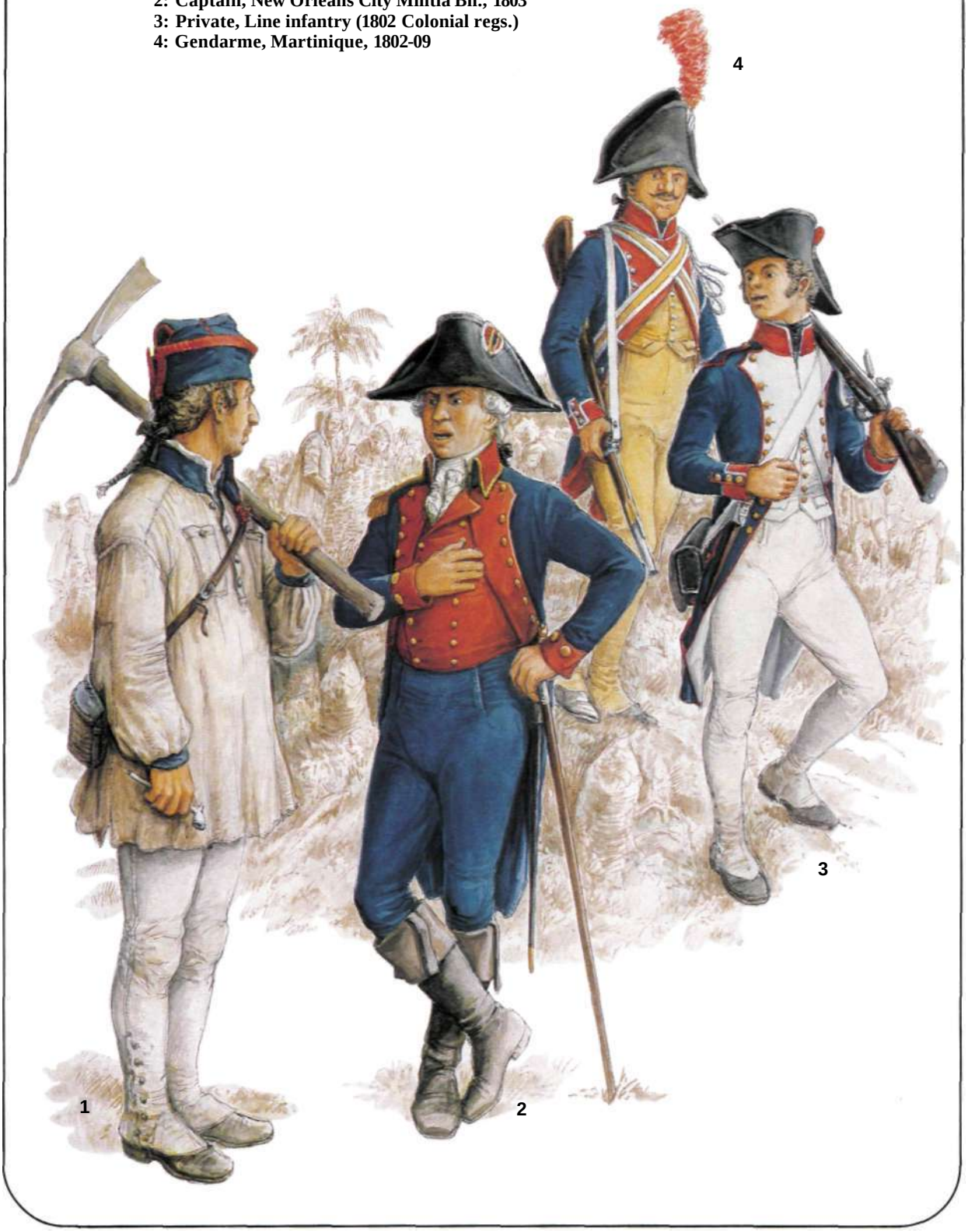
A

Saint-Domingue, 1792-1802:
1: Grenadier officer, Nat. Gd., 1792
2: Officer, Colonial Demi-Bde., 1798-1802
3: Private, Colonial Demi-Bde., 1802
4: Private, Colonial Demi-Bde., 1800-02

B

Saint-Domingue, 1802-1803:
1: Private, French Line Demi-Bde.
2: Private, French Light Demi-Bde.
3: Trooper, Colonial Dragoons

W. Indies & America, 1802-10:
1: Infantryman, undress
2: Captain, New Orleans City Militia Bn., 1803
3: Private, Line infantry (1802 Colonial regs.)
4: Gendarme, Martinique, 1802-09



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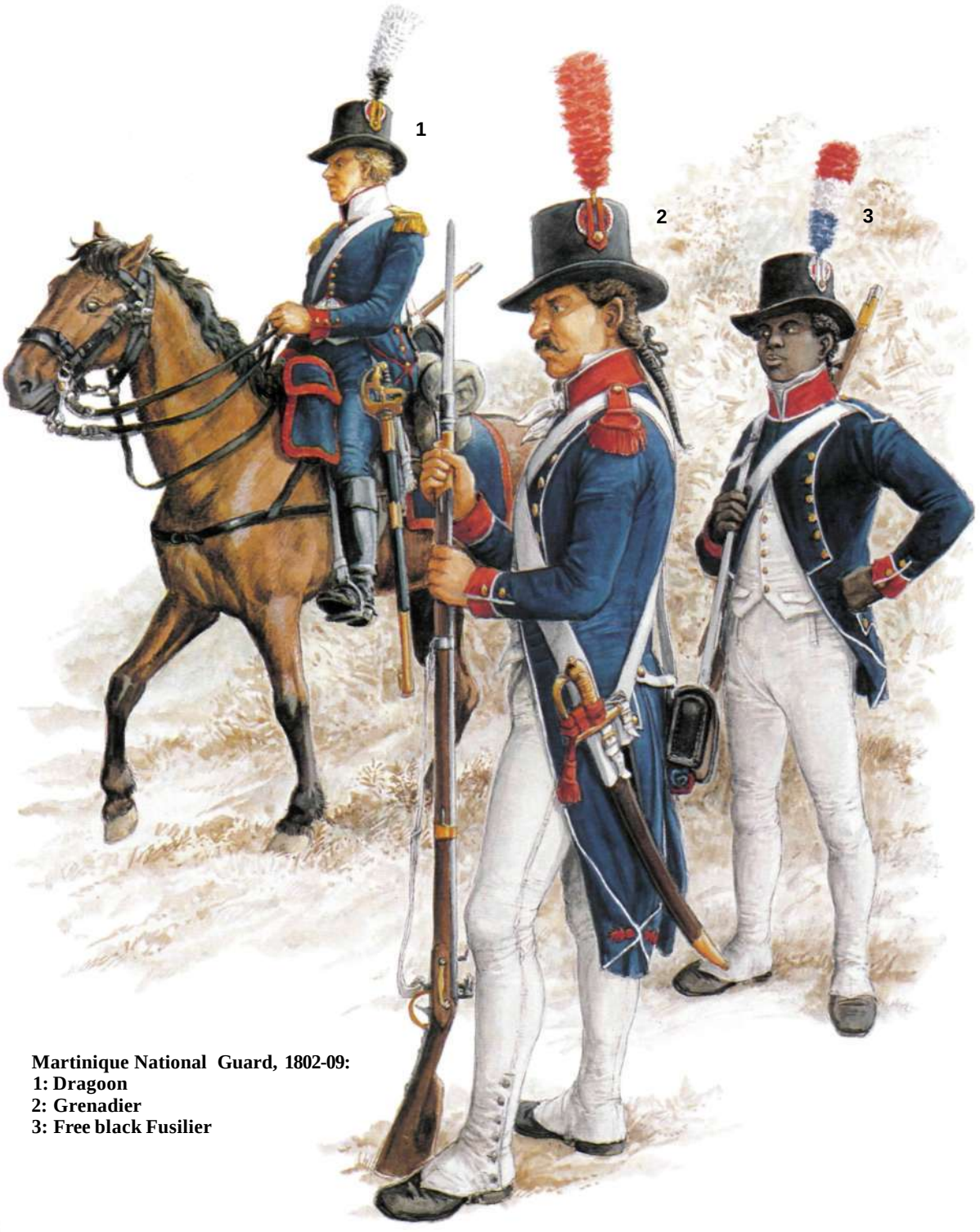
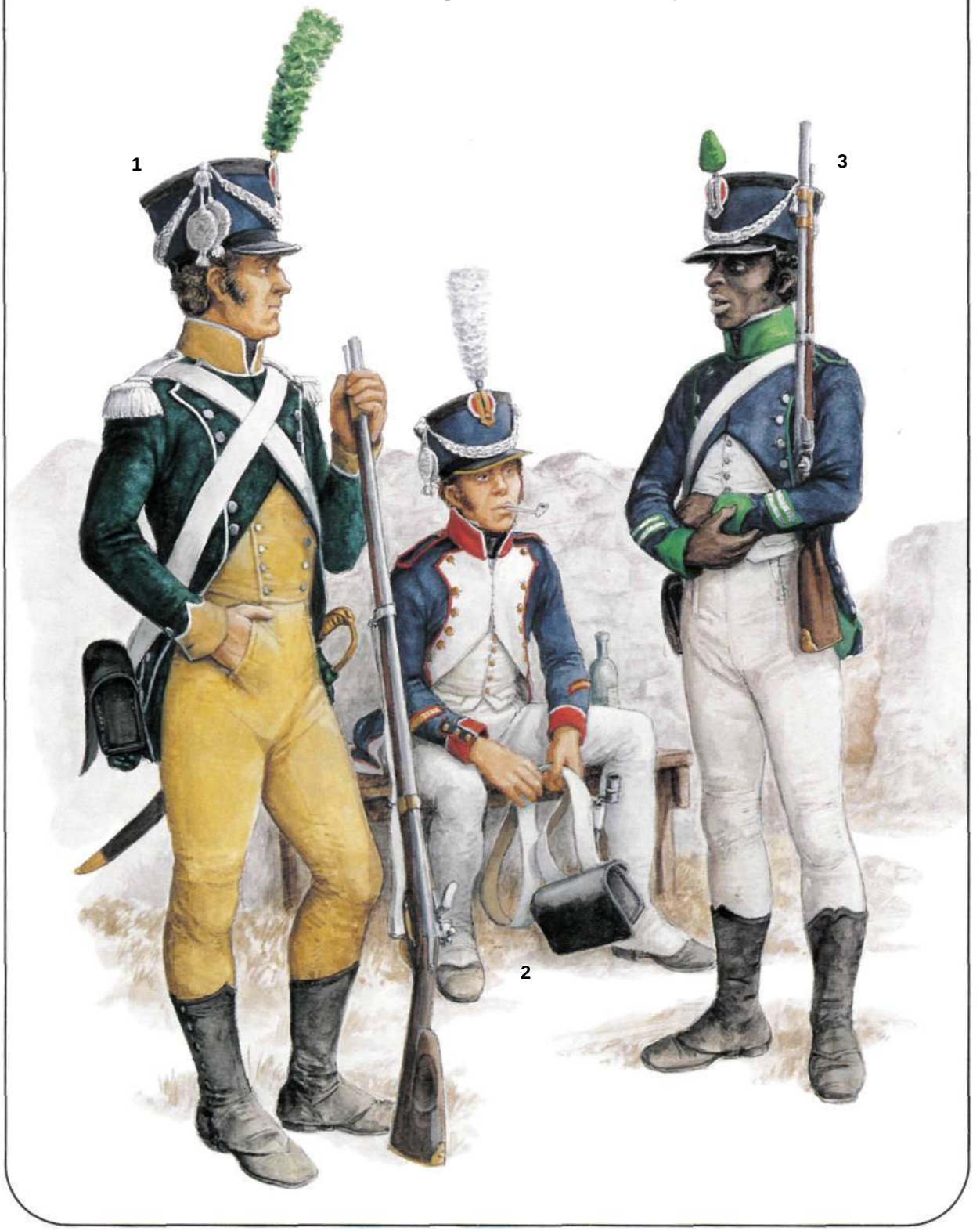


Martinique National Guard, 1802-09:
1: Dragoon
2: Grenadier
3: Free black Fusilier

Ile-de-France & La Réunion, 1803-10:
1: Private, Chasseurs coloniaux, 1803-10
2: Officer, Chasseurs de réserve, 1806-10
3: Private, Chasseurs of Port Nord-Ouest, 1806-10

1: Private, Chasseurs de la Réunion, 1803-10
2: Sgt., Régt. de l'Ile-de-France, 1803-10
3: Cpl., Chasseurs coloniaux, Seychelles Nat. Gd., 1807-10



1: Private, Dutch Jager Bn.; Surinam, 1804
2: Fusilier, 3rd Bataillon colonial, 1807
3: Private, 66e de Ligne; Guadeloupe, 1810
1
2
3

warm colonies than in Europe, this is the only unit we have found adopting it overseas. In 1807 small detachments of the 1st *Chasseurs à cheval* and remnants of the 1st Swiss Demi-Brigade were listed, but these corps were probably incorporated into other troops as they do not appear in 1810. There were also three regular artillery companies.

Local regular corps consisted of four companies of black *Ouvriers*, raised in 1802, reduced to one company in September 1807, but raised to 400 men in 1810; three companies (140 men each) of coloured *Chasseurs de la Guadeloupe;* and 23 Gendarmes. The *Chasseurs* may have worn shakos and the dark blue light infantry uniform, while that of the Gendarmerie was probably as in Martinique.

Auxiliary forces in Guadeloupe consisted of six battalions of National Guards, each battalion having white Fusilier companies, coloured Chasseur companies and a company of dragoons per battalion. It seems that the 'national uniform' was worn by the Guadeloupe *Garde nationale.* In 1807 the British officer William Loftie drew an officer wearing it, but with white collar and cuffs instead of red. Nearby islands such as the Saints, Marie-Galante, St Martin, and La Désirade also had their own National Guard units, on which we have no information. Detachments of the regular troops were present in most dependencies of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

India and the East Indies

The French East Indies to 1803

News of the Revolution arrived at Ile-de-France on 31 January 1790 as sailors landed wearing tricolour cockades on their hats and jackets; soon, the populace and the troops were wearing them too. The *Isle-de-France* Regiment and the 2nd Battalion of the *Pondichéry* Regiment, with some colonial

Gunner of the Spanish Corps of Royal Artillery in 1801. All regular artillery units overseas were part of this corps and wore its uniform of dark blue coat with red collar, cuffs, turnbacks; a waistcoat with brass buttons, and gold lace edging the collar and hat. A white linen uniform with red collar and cuffs was also worn in hot weather stations such as Santo Domingo. The artillery company there was incorporated into the French forces in late 1802—a better fate than the *Fijo de Santo Domingo* infantry battalion, which was disarmed and massacred by Toussaint L'Ouverture's troops. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

Gen. Antoine Richepanse commanded the forces sent to Martinique and Guadeloupe in 1802. After a short but fierce campaign against local black forces in Guadeloupe, his soldiers re-established slavery. Engraving after the painting by Charles Durupt which shows him in hussar dress during the campaigns of the Revolution. Richepanse died of yellow fever in Guadeloupe on 3 September 1802. (Private collection)

artillery were then in garrison. In May a National Guard was formed; and in the years that followed, Ile-de-France and La Réunion followed the progress of the Revolution. One measure that was not adopted was the abolition of slavery. From 1793 the islands became superb bases for privateers, who inflicted great losses on the British East India Company ships for most of the next 17 years.

Practically abandoned during the first years of the Republic, Ile-de-France and La Réunion survived rather well thanks to the privateers. The *Isle-de-France* and *Pondichéry* Regiments became the 107th and 108th regiments in 1792 but withered away for lack of recruits. In June 1796 the 15th Light Demi-Brigade and the 12th Battalion of the Republic—an infantry unit destined for a singular and exotic fate—arrived in Ile-de-France with some commissioners of the Republic. When the commissioners announced that they were there to abolish slavery, the whole National Guard rose and sent them back to France. The 12th Battalion was sent to Java in 1798 to reinforce the Dutch after a year in the Comores and the Seychelles. While Ile-de-France and La Réunion had their share of disturbances due to revolutionary fervour during the 1790s, it was insignificant compared to events in the French West Indies.

It is doubtful whether the 107th and 108th ever wore the white uniform with green facings assigned to the colonial regiments in 1792; but it seems fairly certain that the 'national uniform' would have been adopted from 1794. The troops which arrived in June 1796 had their French woollen uniforms, but we find an issue of white nankeen coat, waistcoat and pantaloons to the 12th Battalion 'due to the heat' in September. In 1797 the battalion was given new uniforms including dark blue cloth coats, hats and new accoutrements. The gunners also seem to have been well appointed, and were seen in their 'brilliant uniforms' firing at British ships during a raid on Ile-de-France in 1799. It is obvious from the above that the troops were well clothed and that measures were taken to cope with the warm weather.

During this period the local regular units in Ile-de-France consisted of National Guards drafted and paid for permanent service. For La Réunion, the *Volontaires de La Réunion* was decreed raised in September 1793 to a strength of 200 men in four companies; they were to wear 'the national uniform fixed for the infantry of the Republic'. Strength was 104 officers and men in August 1794, and it was reduced to a company of 54 all ranks in January 1799.

The 1803 Indian expedition

An expedition to retake possession of the French posts in India sailed from Brest on 6 March 1803. On board were the 3rd Battalions of the 109th Demi-Brigade of the Line and of the 18th Light, a company of the 6th Light Artillery, a few artillery *ouvriers,* and a 60-man guard for Captain-General Decaen. Also on board were various staff officers, and 78 officers for a corps of Sepoys to be raised in Pondichéry, giving a total of 1,347 troops. The frigate *Belle-Poule* arrived at Pondichéry on 15 June; and after some negotiations 180 men of the 109th under the command of Adjutant Commandant Binot landed on the 1st. On 12 July the rest of the

French squadron anchored in Pondichéry harbour. Rumours of war were rampant, and Lord Wellesley, Governor-General of India, decided to delay while discreetly assembling a Royal Navy squadron. Decaen immediately demanded the respect of the treaty, but landed no troops. As dawn rose on 14 July, both the French and the British in Pondichéry gasped—the French fleet was gone!

Sensing a British trap, Decaen had sailed for Ile-de-France, leaving Commandant Binot and his men of the 109th entrenched in the barracks area. When Binot was told by the British that the position would be stormed unless he surrendered, he coolly replied he would save them the trouble by meeting them half way! He was playing for time—in September he was still there, defiantly holding out, demanding the honours of war and immediate repatriation. On 10 September the British accepted, and the French troops marched out with drums beating. Thus ended the short but tense presence of French troops in India during the Napoleonic wars.

The French East Indies 1803-11

The expedition arrived in Ile-de-France on 15 August 1803, and on 23 September, the corvette *Berceau* brought the official confirmation of renewed war with Britain. To satisfy his Dutch allies, Decaen sent most of the 12th Battalion back to Java in October, then set about reorganising the remnants of the garrison.

On 2 November 1803 he ordered a corps of *Chasseurs de la Réunion* to be raised among white

Officers of the 66th Regt. of the Line, Guadeloupe, 1807. The officer on the left wears a dark blue undress *surtout* with gold buttons, epaulettes and gorget. The officer on the right wears a white dress uniform with blue collar, cuffs and piping, tangible evidence that the July 1806 decree introducing white dress uniforms in the infantry did not pass unnoticed in Guadeloupe. Copy by Cecil C. P. Lawson of a drawing by William Loftie. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

inhabitants; this was 387 strong in 1810. Although the official name was changed to *Bataillon de chasseurs et artilleurs des colonies orientales* when some free black artillerymen were added in 1804, it was usually called by its 1803 name. The uniform (see Plate G) was a dark green coatee, lapels and turnbacks; buff collar and cuffs; white metal buttons; white epaulettes; yellow or white nankeen waistcoat and breeches; black or blue short gaiters; white cravat, and a shako. Officers had the same uniform except for a long-tailed coat, hussar boots, and silver buttons and epaulettes. It is not certain that the gunners wore this uniform. On 4 October 1810 three companies of 100 men each of *Cipahis* (Sepoys) captured aboard British ships were attached to the battalion. They were to have a cloth coatee, a nankeen coatee, a waistcoat and trousers.

On 9 November 1804, the two-battalion *Régiment de l' Ile-de-France* was formed from the 15th Light and 18th of the Line. Its uniform was that of the Line infantry (see Plate G). Woefully understrength, it seems never to have had more than 650 men, a far cry from its establishment of 2,581. On 19 September 1810 two 'Irish Companies'—recruited from captured British soldiers on ships—were added, perhaps in desperation, while the regiment's 12 companies were reduced to six.

Trooper of the 1st *Chasseurs à cheval* with an officer of the National Guard, Guadeloupe, 1807. Although called the *Gendarmerie au cheval* by the English artist, this was probably a member of a detachment of *chasseurs à cheval* sent in 1802. He is shown with red shako and plume, with white cords and top band, and a very long visor. The dolman is green with white cuffs, collar and braid; the breeches are dark blue with white trim. Round blue valise trimmed white and imitation leopardskin shabraque edged white. The Guadeloupe National Guard officer wears the blue 'national uniform' with some variations: white cuffs, cuff flaps and collar. Copy by Cecil C. P. Lawson of a drawing by William Loftie. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

Other regular corps consisted of two foot and one horse artillery companies with a detachment of *Ouvriers d'artillerie,* a company of invalid *Vétérans nationaux,* and a 50-man Guard of the Captain-General dressed in hussar uniforms whose colours remain unknown. A small corps of *Gendarmerie impériale* was raised on 20 March 1808 uniformed much the same as in France in dark blue faced with red, white aiguillettes and buttons, bicorn hat, yellow nankeen waistcoat and breeches, and half-boots or gaiters.

The National Guard of Ile-de-France and La Réunion were completely restructured by a series of decrees from October to December 1803. The whites were grouped into *infanterie* companies, each 64 strong wearing the 'national uniform'. Free blacks and mulattos were formed into 24-man sections of *Chasseurs coloniaux* attached to the white companies, uniformed in dark blue coatees, lapels and turnbacks; red collar and cuffs; white piping, and white metal buttons (see Plate F). The gunners of the *Artillerie* were organised in sections for some companies in Ile-de-France, and into three companies at La Réunion, wearing dark blue coatees, lapels and turnbacks; red collar, cuffs and piping; and brass buttons. Only the National Guard of Port Nord-Ouest in Ile-de-France had a different organisation, being a legionary corps with infantry (see Plate F) and Chasseurs uniformed as above but the artillery having the same uniform as the regular foot artillery. There were also some cavalry troops but their uniform is unknown. On 2 June 1806 Decaen decreed the formation of the *Chasseurs de réserve,* which would mobilise companies of black slaves on the plantations with white plantation owners or supervisors as officers. This sedentary militia eventually became known as the *Bataillon africain,* and a second battalion was

embodied on 20 September 1810. The officers had a dark green coatee with dark green cuffs and turnbacks, black collar, silver buttons and epaulettes, white waistcoat and pantaloons worn with boots (see Plate F). The sergeant-majors had a dark blue coatee, cuffs and turnbacks, green collar, white metal buttons, white waistcoat and breeches and black gaiters. The uniform of the men was 'whatever would seem appropriate' when called up. Even the Seychelles did not escape Decaen's attention; on 15 May 1807 he decreed the formation of a *Compagnie de Mahé* National Guard which had two white infantry sections and a black Chasseur section. The white sections had a dark blue coat, lapels and turnbacks piped red; red collar and cuffs piped white; and brass buttons. The black section had a dark blue coatee and lapels piped green; green collar, cuffs and turnbacks; and white metal buttons (see Plate G). All wore shakos, as did nearly all regulars and National Guards on the islands—since at least 1804, they were made locally of cloth on a wicker frame, and considered far better than hats by Decaen.

In spite of slim resources and small numbers, the French in the East Indies made the most of their opportunities, plotting with Asian princes, causing tremendous harm to British commerce, and tying down a great number of British troops. The inevitable finally took place in 1810, when 10,000 British and Indian regulars landed on Ile-de-France to face at most 2,000 French 'regulars' of all sorts (including drafted sailors) and 2,500 National Guards. Even with such odds, there was some sharp fighting in which Capt.-Gen. Decaen, gallant to the end, was wounded.

Napoleon expressed concern and made plans from time to time to send relief to Decaen, in spite of a reluctant Marine minister. Finally, three frigates sailed out of Brest in February 1811 with two

French Light Infantry in action c.1811. The uniform was basically that worn since 1793—dark blue with red collar and cuff flap piped white—but with white metal buttons. Chasseurs had green epaulettes, carabiniers had red epaulettes and voltigeurs green epaulettes, but buff instead of red collars. (The West Point Museum, US Military Academy)

Bataillons expéditionnaires and two companies of artillery on board. In May the fleet learned that the islands had fallen to the British, who in turn learned of the presence of the small French squadron. On 20 May a superior Royal Navy force caught up with and captured two of the frigates at Tamatave, Madagascar, after a stubborn fight. The *Clorinde* (bearing the 1st Battalion and a company of artillery) disobeyed orders to fight it out, sailed away to the Seychelles and held Mahé for a short time. The *Clorinde* eventually got back to Brest but her captain was found guilty of cowardice and jailed.

The Dutch Colonies

The Dutch were generally steadfast if not overly enthusiastic allies of the French during the Napoleonic wars. From 1795, Holland became a satellite of France when the Batavian Republic was created. Its policies were to be those of Napoleon and its colonies an extension of the French overseas territories. The Batavian Republic became the Kingdom of Holland in 1806; but Napoleon was displeased with his brother Louis's royal performance, and in 1810 Holland was simply annexed to France, its army integrated into the French Army.

The Dutch had a vast colonial empire: islands in the West Indies, Surinam in South America, Cape Colony in South Africa, and the rich and extensive 'spice islands' of the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), comprising Sumatra, Java, Borneo and the Celebes. Detachments of French troops were sent to some Dutch colonies, as we find a company of the *Ile-de-France* Regiment at the defence of the Cape in 1806, and the 12th Battalion of the Republic ('Empire' after 1804) in Java.

Following the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 the Dutch sent a number of troops to their colonies: the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th *Jager* (these were light infantry, not rifle) battalions to the West Indies, Surinam and Demerary; the 9th *Jager*, the 22nd Infantry Bn., the 5th Bn. of the Waldeck regiment, and a squadron of the 5th Dragoons to the Cape; the 23rd Infantry joined various European and native troops on Java; and artillery detachments were sent to all colonies. The British (and Portuguese troops from Brazil) gradually captured the Dutch colonies—Surinam after a spirited defence in 1804, the Cape in 1806, etc.—so that by 1810 only the vast Dutch East Indies remained. On 18 February 1811 news arrived at Batavia (now Djakarta) that Holland and its colonies were now part of Napoleon's French Empire.

Actually, Napoleonic administration in Java and its dependencies arrived in January 1808 with Marshal Daendels as Governor-General. His mandate was to reorganise the administration and the defences of the East Indies, and he went about it with great energy. He found less than 4,000 troops fit for service from various units. On 7 March 1808, using white soldiers and some sailors as cadres, he decreed the levy of a colonial army of over 19,000 men by drafting thousands of natives. A *'State . . . of the Army of His Majesty the Emperor of the French . . . in the East Indies'* dated 1 March 1811 showed a three-battalion artillery regiment; the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Line Infantry regiments of three battalions each; a

Major of a Line infantry regiment in walking-out order, wearing breeches, stockings, buckled shoes and sporting a cane—no doubt a common sight on the streets of colonial towns. From an engraving, *c.*1805. (Private collection)

regiment of *Jagers* of two battalions; a cavalry regiment; three garrison infantry regiments of two battalions each and a garrison battalion detached at Macassar, Palembang and Timor. These gave a total of 17,774 of whom only 2,430 were Europeans, including the remnants of the French 12th Battalion which had been used to form the 2nd Infantry Regiment in 1808. The battle performance of these forces was somewhat erratic due to their very nature; but Governor-General Janssens put up considerable resistance on Java before his surrender on 18 September 1811 to a 12,000-strong Anglo-Indian army, half of which was European. Some further resistance was given elsewhere, notably in the Celebes by local princes as late as 1814.

The uniform of Dutch troops sent overseas was dark blue with various facings. The 5th and 8th *Jagers* had green facings piped white at the collar, cuffs, lapels and turnbacks (see Plate H); the 9th *Jagers* had red facings; the 22nd Infantry had red facings with white buttonhole lace; the 5th Bn., Waldeck had yellow facings; the 5th Dragoons had short blue coats and trousers laced white, yellow waistcoats and 'Tarleton' helmets. All had white metal buttons. The artillery wore blue faced with red with brass buttons. Bicorn hats appear to have been worn by troops in America and at the Cape. The dress of the troops organised by Marshal Daendels in the East Indies is presently unknown in any detail.

* * *

Colonial troops in France

During the Revolution and the Empire there were a number of units in France either acting as dépôts or raised to be sent to the colonies, or recruited from blacks or mulattos from the colonies serving in France. The *Hussard américains* was the first black unit to be raised in France, although it was quickly absorbed into the 13th *Chasseurs à cheval* in December 1792. Black soldiers from West Indian demi-brigades exchanged or sent to France were formed into several *Compagnies d'hommes noirs et de couleur militaire,* stationed from May 1798 at Ile d'Aix, some of which were sent to Senegal (see above for uniforms) a year later. A battalion of *Chasseurs africains* formed from 18 January 1803 was to be part of Gen. Decaen's expedition to the East Indies. It was uniformed in green, a fine-looking corps according to Decaen; but its transport ship did not sail with the fleet and the corps was amalgamated into the *Bataillon des Pioniers Noirs,* which became *Royal-Africain* in 1806.[2] Domingue Hercule, a black who had won fame as an officer in

French sepoy wearing the green uniform faced red prescribed in 1786, 1802 and in 1814. The 1802 battalion was never raised; but perhaps the three companies raised in the Ile-de-France in 1810 and attached to the *Chasseurs de la Réunion* wore something akin to this. From Vernet and Lami's 1824 *Costumes militaires* . . . (Private collection)

[2]In the service of Murat's Kingdom of Naples. See MAA 88, *Napoleon's Italian and Neapolitan Troops.*

the Guard and as commander of the *Pioniers Noirs*, raised a corps of *Chasseurs coloniaux* from blacks at Bordeaux from 16 May 1815; dressed in dark blue Light Infantry uniforms, they were disbanded in August after a mutiny in Agens.

Several units of European infantry were raised to serve in the colonies but stayed in France. The *Bataillon de l'Ile-de-France* was raised on 30 March 1803, uniformed as the Line Infantry and destined for Ile-de-France, but amalgamated into the 40th of the Line instead. On 16 August 1803 four *Bataillons coloniaux* were raised: the 1st at Walcheren, the 2nd in Corsica, the 3rd at Ile-de-Ré and the 4th at Belle-Isle. The 3rd furnished large detachments of recruits to the colonies. These battalions were reputed to have received the 'bad subjects' of the army by 1811. Their uniforms were to be steel grey faced with red, with white metal buttons (see Plate H). Their muskets were withdrawn in November 1813, and they became pioneers armed with picks only.

On 20 August 1811, a *Bataillon de Pionniers coloniaux* was attached to each of these battalions. These were punishment units, uniformed in round jackets, waistcoats, pantaloons, half-gaiters, forage caps and a greatcoat all in steel grey with white metal buttons. The officers, NCOs and corporals had steel grey long-tailed coats.

All the colonial battalions saw coastal defence action at various times. Two companies of *Canonniers des colonies* were raised on 10 February 1808 and appear to have been the gunners sent to the East Indies in the 1811 expedition; they wore the Line artillery uniform. After Napoleon's first abdication, a *Régiment colonial étranger* was raised on 16 December 1814 and after various transmutations became the *Légion de Hohenlohe*—which is itself considered to be the indirect ancestor of the world's most famous colonial unit: the French Foreign Legion.

Louis Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon and King of Holland 1806-10. Holland was then a satellite kingdom of the French Empire, as was its colonial empire in the East and West Indies. Engraving after the 1809 painting by C. M. Hodges in which King Louis wears the white-faced-red uniform of his guard infantry. (Private collection)

* * *

Guadeloupe 1815

The treaties of 1814 returned to France most of her old colonies except Ile-de-France. The 26th of the Line was sent to Martinique, the 62nd to Guadeloupe, two companies of the 73rd to French Guiana, and the 5th Light Infantry to La Réunion. With the news of Napoleon's return, most colonial authorities adopted a prudent 'wait and see' attitude and, with considerable British pressure, remained loyal to Louis XVIII. The exception was Guadeloupe, where the tricolour flags and cockades were again seen on 17 June 1815. Thousands of miles away, Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo the next day, and abdicated on 22 June. On 3 August a British envoy bearing this news demanded the surrender of Guadeloupe; but Col. Boyer did not believe a word and determined to fight for the Emperor to the last. A strong British force succeeded in landing on 9 August; and after some skirmishes, but few losses on either side, the island

Marshal Herman Willem Daendels, Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. Napoleonic administration arrived with him when he landed at Batavia, Java on 1 January 1808. Within a few months this energetic and talented administrator greatly increased the size of the garrison, instituted prefecture-style districts, and promoted social measures such as education for natives. He was replaced by Governor-General Janssens on 11 May 1811. He is shown in the dark blue marshal's uniform embroidered with gold. (J. Erlacht, *Fastes militaires* . . . 1859.)

capitulated on 10 August 1815. The honour of the last engagement of the Napoleonic wars was left to members of Napoleon's overseas army.

Conclusion

Thus we close what can only be an introductory work. At least 60,000 men were sent overseas to serve with the many locally-raised regular troops. National Guards played a major rôle in the defence of overseas territories; and critics sometimes forget that these were citizen-soldiers pitted against superior numbers of enemy regulars. Napoleon did what he could, given the weak state of the French Navy. His greatest colonial effort, the Leclerc expedition to Saint-Domingue, was a tragic failure which, as he reflected later at St Helena, could have been averted. As for the soldiers posted overseas, who knew themselves lost in the long run, their objective was to tie down as many enemy troops and ships for as long as possible. In this they certainly succeeded.

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The Plates

A1: Gunner, Corps royal de l'artillerie des colonies, 1789-1792

The uniform of the corps was similar to the Army's artillery except for anchors replacing lilies on the inside turnbacks. Our man has a tricolour cockade on his hat; some of the first troops to rally to the new insignia were gunners of the corps in Martinique. (*Sources: Encyclopédie Méthodique, Marine,* Paris, 1786, III; *Archives Nationales,* Colonies, C8A, vol. 93)

Trooper of the *Hussards américains,* also called *Légion de Saint-Georges* after their commander. It was raised during September 1792 from black and mulatto volunteers from the colonies living in France, especially from the Bordeaux area. The uniform was dark blue with red facings and white lace. It did not serve in the colonies, but formed the 13th *Chasseurs à cheval* in December 1792 and campaigned in Flanders. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

A2: Private, Bataillon Guyane and Régiment Port-au-Prince, 1790-92

The colonial infantry in America and Africa had blue coats and round hats. By the regulations of 7 December 1786, these two units were given the same uniform with red collar and cuffs. The M1779 musket for colonial troops was the standard weapon, and was made at Tulle under the auspices of the Marine ministry. It resembled the Army M1777 but had mostly brass furnishings; it probably remained in use for many troops and National Guards well into the 19th century. (*Sources: ibid* & J. Boudriot, *Armes à feu françaises; modèles d'ordonnance,* Paris, 1961-1967.)

A3: Private, Régiment Pondichéry, 1790-93

He wears the white uniform prescribed for colonial infantry in the French East Indies. Since 1786 nearly all French colonial infantry had round hats, to which tricolour cockades were added when the news of the Revolution arrived in early 1790. (*Sources: Archives Nationales,* Marine, A1, vol. 139, No. 10.)

B1: Grenadier officer, National Guard of Le Cap; Saint-Domingue, September 1792

He is uniformed as per the corps regulations, in generally the same uniform as in France but with red turnbacks rather than white. The enlisted Grenadiers probably had round hats with red pompons but officers would have worn bicorns. From 1789 many mulattos were commissioned in the National Guard. (*Sources:* 1 September 1792 regulation quoted in: A. Nemours, *Les premiers citoyens et. .. députés noirs et de couleur,* Port-au-Prince, 1941, pp. 131-132.)

B2: Officer of a Colonial Demi-Brigade; Saint-Domingue, c.1798-1802

The uniform worn by Toussaint L'Ouverture's army of the French Republic was usually blue with red facings; round hats were common. This figure is based on a sketch by the British officer/artist Charles Hamilton Smith, who was then in the West Indies. (*Source:* Houghton Library, Harvard University, USA.)

B3: Private of a Colonial Demi-Brigade; Saint-Domingue, 1802

This figure is taken from a water-colour showing the battle of Le Cap by Dutch artist J. A. Langendyk, who served in the West Indies during this period. A round hat is shown, but bicorns and turbans were also worn. (*Source:* Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, 15230.)

B4: Private of a Colonial Demi-Brigade; Saint-Domingue, c.1800-02

The details of this uniform are given in a draft plate by C. H. Smith and generally agree with other sources—in particular the shako, the style and lacing of the coatee, and the trousers. This may appear 'British' in style, but it seems that some Spanish and French troops in the tropics also used coatees and trousers in particular. About 95 per cent of the enlisted men in Toussaint L'Ouverture's army of the French Republic were blacks. (*Source:* Houghton Library, Harvard University, USA.)

C1: Private of a French Demi-Brigade of Line Infantry; Saint-Domingue, 1802-03

Finding the European uniforms totally unsuitable in such a climate, Gen. Leclerc decreed a more

'tropical' uniform for his army on 18 May 1802. The Line Infantry wore dark blue coatees with white lapels and round hats turned up on one side. (*Sources* for all figures on this plate: P. Roussier, 'Les Chapeaux à haute forme de l'armée de Saint-Domingue', *La Sabretache,* 1935, pp. 196-217; Rochambeau Papers, University of Florida, Nos. 83, 331, 778, 1094.)

C2: Private of a French Light Infantry Demi-Brigade; Saint-Domingue, 1802-03

The Light Infantry were given the round hat and the coatee, which was dark blue with red piping and pointed lapels, by Gen. Leclerc's local regulations of May 1802.

C3: Trooper, Colonial Dragoons; Saint-Domingue, 1802-03

This unit wore all-green jackets with round hats, and a shipping invoice tells us it was well equipped with green dragoon housings, saddles, etc. It seems to have incorporated the cavalry brought by Leclerc, as well as finding recruits among the local populace favourable to the French metropolitan army.

D1: Private, infantry, undress; West Indies, c. 1802-10

Private of infantry wearing the undress smock with blue collar and cuffs, and two pockets, prescribed in the colonial dress regulations of 1802 for troops in the West Indies, French Guiana and Senegal. We have added the standard forage cap. (*Source:* Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA.)

D2: Captain, New Orleans City Militia Battalion; Louisiana, 1803

Most Militia officers in Louisiana wore the 1792 uniform prescribed for the Militia infantry of the Spanish colonies, which was blue faced red with gold buttons and a gold lace edging the collar. Company officers wore epaulettes while majors and above had one or more gold laces on each cuff. During the short period of French rule, the red Spanish cockade was put aside and the French tricolour cockade was worn until 20 December 1803. (*Sources:* portraits in the Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans; *Estado Militar de Nueva España,* Mexico, 1803)

D3: Private, Line Infantry, Colonial Dress Regulations of 1802

These regulations signed by Napoleon on 14 May 1802 basically prescribed the same uniform coat as in France but made of light cloth. Instead of breeches, a popular colonial garment of the time, gaiter-trousers, were prescribed in linen or nankeen. Gaiter-trousers had been worn by some French troops in the tropics during the War of American Independence, and obviously remained fairly popular during the Napoleonic wars. (*Sources:* Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA.)

Soldier of the Battalion of Black Pioneers, organised from blacks in France on 11 May 1803. They had a brown uniform with red cuffs and lapels. The battalion was transferred to the Kingdom of Naples and became the *Regiment Royal-Africain* on 14 August 1806. The white pioneer at the left wears the steel grey overcoat which was also the uniform (minus the shako) of the four colonial pioneer battalions raised in 1811. From a print in Eugène Fieffé's 1854 *Histoire des troupes étrangères* . . . (Royal Canadian Military Institute, Toronto.)

D4: Gendarme, Martinique, 1802-09
Our subject wears basically the 1791 dress uniform of the *Gendarmerie nationale* but with yellow nankeen waistcoat and gaiter-trousers as decreed for Martinique in 1802. *Brigadiers* were distinguished by an inch-wide silver lace on the cuffs. (*Sources:* AN, Colonies, C8A, 105, f. 100.)

E1: Dragoon, Martinique National Guard, 1802-09
Mounted units in the West Indies, although named dragoons, were dressed in simpler uniforms than in France and with round hats rather than brass helmets. Only the wealthier inhabitants were formed into dragoon companies. (Figures on Plate E are based on the Decree of 14 October 1802 in Durand-Molard, *Code de la Martinique,* 1811,IV, pp. 508-509.)

E2: Grenadier, Martinique National Guard, 1802-09
The dark blue infantry uniform was common to all infantry units, but the white companies had long-tailed coats while the free black companies had coatees. Grenadiers were distinguished by red epaulettes, grenades on the turnbacks, cockade loops and plumes on the round hat.

E3: Free black infantry Fusilier, Martinique National Guard, 1802-09
He wears the coatee assigned to free blacks, but the uniform was otherwise the same as for white infantry, and all Fusiliers were distinguished by the tricolour plume on their round hats.

F1: Private, Chasseurs coloniaux, Ile-de-France and La Réunion National Guard, 1803-10
Captain-General Decaen dressed his troops notably well from the resources at his disposal as will be seen in the following two plates. Free blacks and mulattos were attached to each company of the National Guard, given the title of *Chasseurs coloniaux* and this distinctive uniform. (*Sources: Recueil des Lois publiées à Maurice . . . depuis 1803 . . .jusqu'à . . . 1823,* Port-Louis, 1824, pp. 23, 25, 44.)

Fusilier of the 1st Colonial Bn., 1807, wearing a steel grey coat with red collar, cuffs and lapels, white turnbacks and white metal buttons. The shako has a brass plate, white cord and coloured pompon according to company. A variation shown in some prints is a blue plume with a red top. All four battalions had the same uniform. Engraving by Martinet. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

F2: Officer, Chasseurs de réserve, 1806-10
This organisation mobilised trusted plantation slaves under the direction of owners and overseers. He wears with his officer's uniform a wide-brimmed hat, popular among planters; and is armed with a long-barrelled 'buccaneer' musket, which was a colonial favourite for hunting. (*Sources: Recueil* . . . p. 152.)

F3: Private, Chasseur Companies of Port Nord-Ouest, Ile-de-France National Guard, 1806-10
On 18 June 1806, the 1st Battalion of the National Guard Legion of the city of Port Nord-Ouest was augmented by two élite companies of white *Chasseurs.* They had the 'national uniform' like the Fusiliers and Grenadiers; but wore green epaulettes and sword knot, and, most surprisingly, 'Polish shakos' with green plumes. Other companies undoubtedly wore the locally-made regular shakos, the Grenadiers probably having red epaulettes and plumes. (*Sources: Recueil* . . . pp. 153-154.)

G1: Private, Chasseur de la Réunion, 1803-10
This was a regular unit, raised mostly from the white créole inhabitants of the island of La Réunion, with some free coloured gunners added later. The infantry wore a green *Chasseur* style uniform faced buff, with white epaulettes. The waistcoat and breeches could be of white or yellow nankeen, and we feel the latter is more likely for this corps, with black short light infantry gaiters. (*Sources: Recueil* . . . p. 27.)

G2: Sergeant, Régiment de l'Ile-de-France, 1804-10
The various line units at Ile-de-France and La Réunion were amalgamated into this regular colonial Line regiment in late 1804; the Line infantry uniform of the 1802 colonial dress regulations was no doubt worn. Our figure wears the dark blue shako with a white plume issued in 1804. No shako plate has been found for any French East Indian unit, and it is assumed that they had none but made good use of cockades, etc., much like

Voltigeur of the 1st Colonial Bn., 1807, wearing dark blue instead of the regulation steel grey, with a red collar and cuffs, white turnbacks and white metal buttons. The distinctions of Voltigeurs were the green plumes, shako cord, and fringed epaulettes, the yellow collar, and the hanger carried on its own shoulder belt. Print by Martinet. (Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection)

the pre-1806 shakos in France itself. The *12e Bataillon de l'Empire* in Dutch Java wore the same uniform from 1804 to 1808. (*Sources:* AN, Dépôt des Fortifications des Colonies, Loix, 1, No. 78; H. Prentout, *L'Ile de France sous Decaen, 1803-1810,* Paris, 1901, pp. 158-159; C.-L. Chassin & L. Hennet, *Les Volontaires nationaux pendant la Révolution,* Paris, 1899, I, p. 244.)

G3: Corporal, Chasseurs coloniaux, Seychelles National Guard, 1807-10

The Seychelles islands were a dependency of Ile-de-France and, in 1807, the white and free coloured inhabitants were organised into a company at Mahé, by a decree which is apparently the first document relating to the organisation and uniforms of a military corps in the islands. Carbines were specified as the armament of the coloured *Chasseurs.* (*Sources: Recueil* . . . pp. 167-168.)

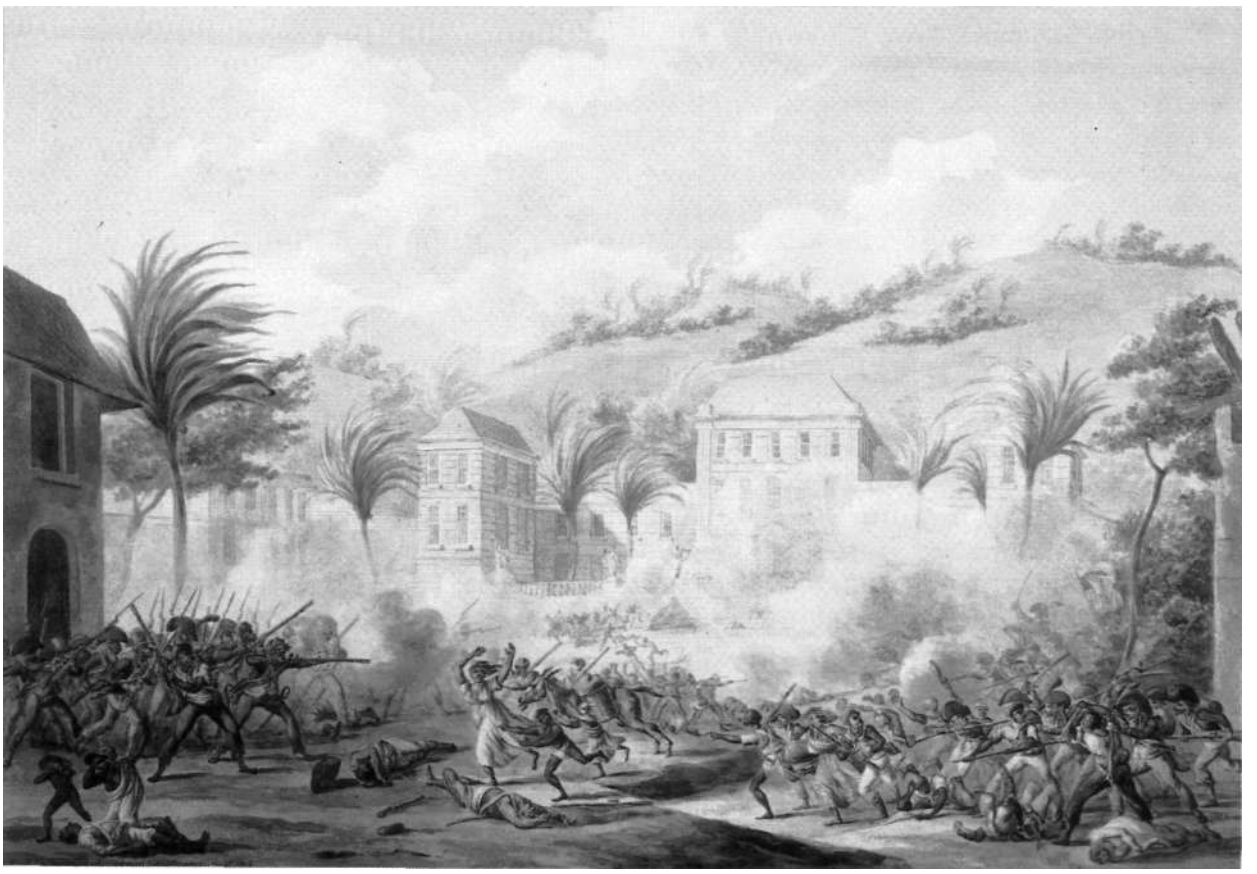
H1: Private, Dutch 5th or 8th Jager Battalions, Surinam, 1804

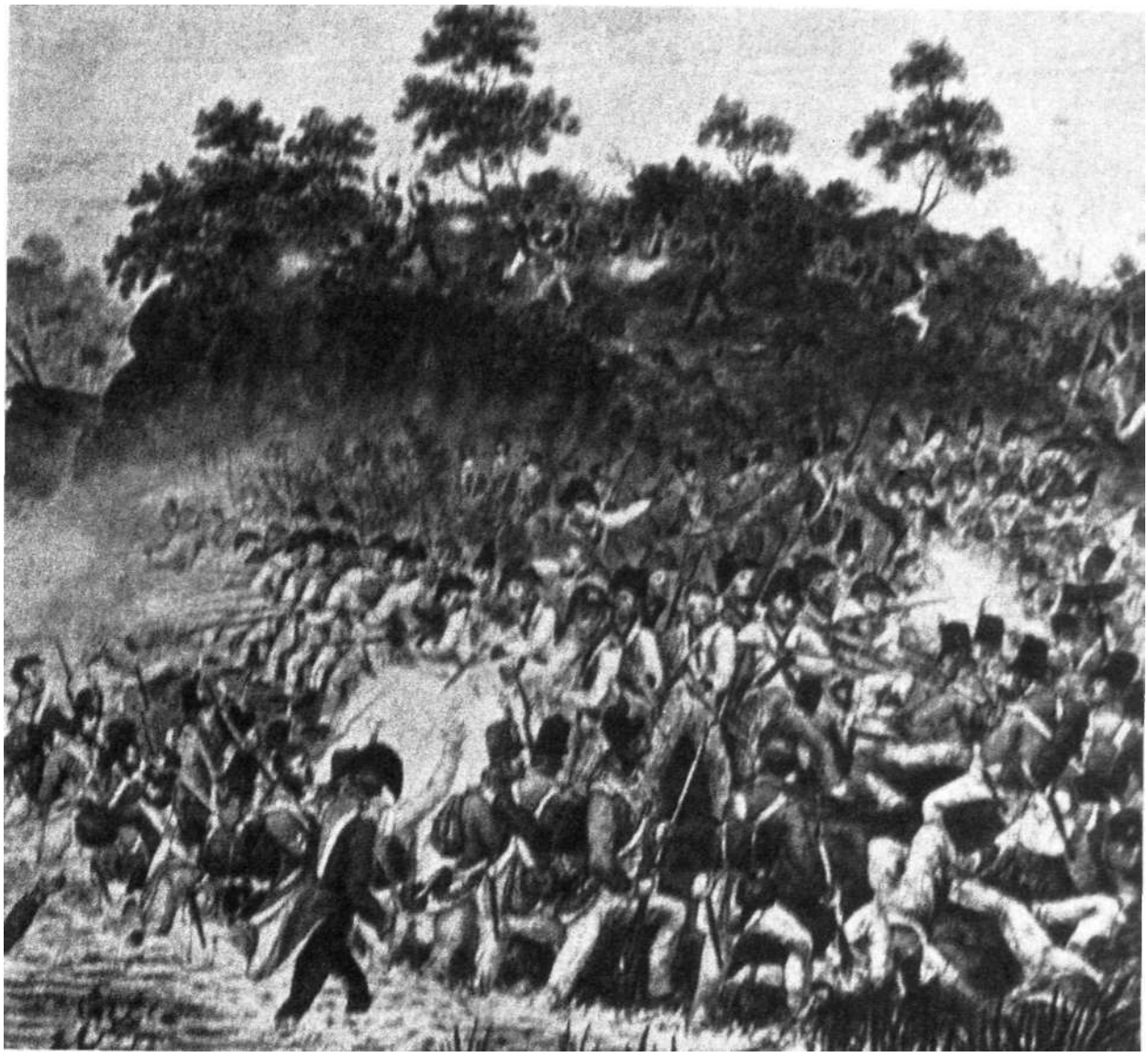
Among the troops sent to Dutch colonies in 1802-1803 were the 5th *Jager* sent to Surinam; and the 8th *Jager,* with four companies in Surinam, two at Curaçao and one each on the islands of St Eustatius and St Martin. Both had the same uniform of dark blue faced light green. Our plate is based on a water-colour of Dutch uniforms by the British officer William Loftie who was part of the expedition which captured Paramaibo in May 1804. The cut of Dutch uniforms, arms and equipment followed that of the French. (*Sources:* Loftie Ms *'Military Costumes etc'* plate 51, *Bibliothèque nationale,* Paris; 1802 water-colour by J. Langendyk, Dutch Army Museum, Delft.)

H2: Private, Fusiliers, 3e Bataillon colonial, 1807

These colonial battalions never went overseas as units but the 3rd, stationed at Ile-de-Ré, sent

This water-colour of an engagement at Le Cap, Saint-Domingue in 1802 between Leclerc's freshly-landed European veterans and Toussaint L'Ouverture's black soldiers, with civilians caught in between, is symbolic of the tragedy which swept the island. (Water-colour by J. A. Langendyk, *c.*1802-4, Royal Library Windsor Castle; reproduced by gracious permission of Her Majesty The Queen)





An engagement in Guadeloupe during 1810 by a British participant, possibly the battle at Rivière-Noire, fought on 3 February. Though very unclear, it does give some hints as to the dress of French troops. In the centre the 66th of the Line wear white coats with blue cuffs and lapels, striped trousers, and bicorns. In the background are some Chasseurs(?) wearing shakos, blue coatees and blue or white trousers. (Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, 1941)

hundreds of individual men to units overseas. The uniform shown is based on a plate by Martinet, which features a fully garnished shako with a tall plume. (*Sources:* Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University, USA.)

H3: Private, 66e Régiment de Ligne; Guadeloupe, 1810
This figure is based on a water-colour dated 1810 by a British participant of the campaign on Guadeloupe. Note the white uniform and bicorn still in use. (*Sources: Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research,* 1941, plate facing p. 2.)

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